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*Higher School Certificate*

**DISTINCTION COURSES**

**An Information Booklet**

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# Higher School Certificate Distinction Courses

## **About This Booklet**

The aim of this booklet is to provide an introduction to the Board of Studies' Distinction Courses. Potential students, their parents, teachers and other interested people can all use this booklet to find out what Distinction Courses are, who can study them, what is involved, and what it is like to study them.

It is hoped that schools will make both students and teachers aware of this booklet so that those who are interested can use it to find out all they wish to know. Students who may be interested in taking a Distinction Course can use this booklet to get some idea of the content covered in each of the courses, the assessment requirements and the time commitment needed. There are also answers to commonly asked questions about Distinction Courses.

## **Introduction to Distinction Courses**

Distinction Courses are high-level HSC courses specifically designed to provide new study opportunities for exceptionally gifted and talented students. The courses were developed by the Board of Studies to be challenging, broadly based HSC courses approximating first year university study. The courses are in areas that are outside the range of existing HSC courses, thus providing a broader perspective across the curriculum and preparation for university study. Although they are nominally 2 Unit courses requiring a minimum of 120 hours' study time, these one-year courses are well above 2 Unit standard.

## **Distinction Courses Overview**

The courses are delivered by the University of New England and Charles Sturt University through distance education. They require students to employ independent learning approaches to study and assignments, to use email communications with their lecturers and fellow students, and to attend residential seminars to interact not only with their peers but also with experts in the field of study. The courses provide an opportunity for a type of study that HSC students otherwise may not gain.

Part of the attraction of these courses for accelerated students lies in the fact that they study and socialise with like-minded highly talented students, and that they study in a university environment during the residential schools.

Since 1994 three courses of study have been offered each year under the Distinction Courses Program:

- The Philosophy Distinction Course does not assume any previous study in this area. It is designed to develop philosophical skills across the curriculum and to build on the knowledge, interests and reflective capabilities that students bring to their study. The Philosophy course is delivered by the University of New England, Armidale. The course begins with Core Studies, which examine central questions in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and political philosophy. Optional studies investigate such issues in greater depth.
- The Comparative Literature Course is concerned with the intertextual study of literature produced in different national, cultural and social contexts. It seeks to explore how common concerns find their expression in the works of writers within disparate cultures. The delivering university, Charles Sturt University (Wagga Wagga Campus), expects that for most students the literature studied will be in English or English translation but will extend across different countries, cultures and periods. However, study of literature on a comparative basis may also draw on a knowledge of languages other than English.
- The Cosmology Distinction Course, delivered by Charles Sturt University (Bathurst Campus), includes elements from the subject areas of history, sociology and mathematics as well as physics and astronomy. Features of the course are lectures by active research astronomers, and a study tour of seven major astronomical observatories, including Siding Spring Observatory and other installations in the Coonabarabran/Narrabri area, such as the Australia Telescope. While participating students usually have a background in science and mathematics, this is not a prerequisite for entry to the course.

To be eligible for consideration for participation in the Distinction Course Program, students must be accelerants who are presenting for the HSC examination in one or more courses at the highest course level a year ahead of their cohort. Prospective students apply to the Board for entry to Distinction Course study.

Eligible students obtain detailed information about the courses and their implementation at an Information Day held annually at the end of the HSC examination period, usually at the University of Sydney. Formal applications for entry to the Distinction Course Program are required by late November and successful applicants are informed by mid-December.

There are no specific subject prerequisites for studying a Distinction Course. However, the courses, by their very nature, necessitate the students' commitment to independent study and a high degree of motivation, initiative and interest in the course chosen. Distinction Courses have already proved to be stimulating and rewarding experiences for those seeking a new challenge that bridges HSC and university studies.

## **Some Commonly Asked Questions**

### ***Why do a Distinction Course?***

Distinction Courses provide an opportunity for a type of study very different from other Higher School Certificate courses. The courses are challenging and allow students to explore and develop their own ideas, and to interact with like-minded peers. In terms of their content, mode of study and contact with university personnel, they provide a preparation for university study and a broader perspective across the curriculum.

### ***Who can do a Distinction Course?***

Exceptional students who have accelerated and completed, ahead of their cohort, all HSC course requirements in one subject area generally at the highest course level may be eligible to study a Distinction Course. Students will have completed the accelerated course prior to the year in which they intend to study a Distinction Course.

Students selected for Distinction Course study will be able to choose any one of the Distinction Courses, regardless of which HSC course was completed at the highest level the year before. There are no particular subject prerequisites for the Distinction Courses.

### ***How are students selected?***

A selection panel, comprising representatives of universities and the Office of the Board of Studies, conducts the selection process. The selection criteria include:

- completion of one HSC course at the highest course level a year ahead of the student's cohort
- presentation for the Higher School Certificate examination in the year prior to the year in which the Distinction Course is to be taken
- outstanding achievement in the accelerated course at the HSC examination
- evidence of a pattern of high achievement in all courses studied
- support from the school principal
- school report indicating suitability to study a Distinction Course which includes an assessment of the student's:
  - specific academic strengths
  - other strengths including creativity
  - ability as a self-motivated independent learner

- research skills
- communication skills
- personal initiative and leadership skills
- relevant achievements within the school community
- relevant achievements in the wider community.

The process of selection includes:

- the Office of the Board of Studies, with the assistance of schools, identifies HSC accelerants as prospective Distinction Course students
- the Office of the Board, through the school principal, invites students to submit an Expression of Interest to undertake a Distinction Course
- students who submit an Expression of Interest are invited to attend an Information Day in Sydney with a view to assisting them in making decisions on courses of study for the following year
- students make formal application to the Office of the Board to undertake a preferred Distinction Course the following year
- the Selection Panel meets to consider applications
- the Office of the Board advises students of results of selection process.

### ***How do I study a Distinction Course?***

The courses are taught by The University of New England and Charles Sturt University through distance education. The learning materials, which are delivered to the student's home, consist of modules of work, related readings and required assignments. Assignments, projects and examinations are marked by university lecturers and/or members of the course committees. During the course students attend compulsory residential seminars usually held at universities. These seminars provide an introduction to university life, presentations by university lecturers and interaction with other Distinction Course students. Between the seminars, students are encouraged to maintain contact with each other and with the course coordinator via phone and email, as well as using the forums on the Distinction Courses website.

The universities appoint a coordinator for each course. The coordinator is responsible for the arrangements for, and conduct of, the residential seminars and is the primary contact person for students undertaking the course.

### ***Will I get university recognition for studying a Distinction Course?***

The universities in NSW and the ACT have agreed to recognise study in the Distinction Courses, but the precise arrangements vary from university to university and from course to course.

The universities have considered recognition of good results in Distinction Courses through advanced standing and credit transfer. *Advanced standing* means that students have the status of higher year students. This does not grant credit or reduce the requirements for the degree, but may enable students to use their previous studies to gain access to advanced level units. *Credit transfer* means that students receive credit towards their degree for previous studies and thereby shorten their degree program. Credit may be for specific units in the program, or allow a general exemption from, say, one first-year subject. The universities will consider either advanced standing or credit transfer on an individual basis. The nature and extent of this recognition is likely to depend also on performance in other HSC subjects and on the degree program to which entry is sought. Some universities have provided more specific statements

on the type of recognition to be granted. To obtain more information, students taking Distinction Courses, or intending to do so, are encouraged to make contact directly with the universities.

***Does my Distinction Course count towards my Higher School Certificate?***

The 2 units from Distinction Courses are in addition to the 10 HSC units needed for the award of the Higher School Certificate. The marks gained in Distinction Courses, however, can be counted towards the calculation of the UAI if they are among the student's best 10 units.

***How are my Distinction Course results reported on my Higher School Certificate Record of Achievement?***

Distinction Course results are reported on the Higher School Certificate Record of Achievement using the grades awarded by the universities, ie HD (High Distinction), D (Distinction), Cr (Credit), P (Pass).

These grades will appear in the columns headed *Examination Mark* and *HSC Mark*. No marks will appear in the columns headed *Assessment Mark* and *Performance Band*. The standards applied in the awarding of these grades are equivalent to those applied at the end of first year university.

***How are the Distinction Course marks scaled for their inclusion in the Universities Admission Index (UAI)?***

**• Allocation of grades and scaling of marks**

To arrive at scaled marks for use in calculating the UAI the following procedures occur:

- The delivering universities assess the students' performances in assignments and examinations over the whole course of study and allocate final assessment marks.
- These marks are converted to university grades using the following minimum standards:
  - Minimum High Distinction: 85 (ie HD = 85 to 100)
  - Minimum Distinction: 75 (ie D = 75 to 84)
  - Minimum Credit: 65 (ie Cr = 65 to 74)
  - Minimum Pass: 50 (ie P = 50 to 64)
- Using these critical values and the students' university grades the Board's examiners scale the students' marks in a linear fashion. In undertaking this scaling process the Board's examiners apply these principles:
  - The maximum scaled mark is equated to a value set by the examiners (usually 100). If there is a mark of 100 it will remain a **scaled** mark of 100.
  - The minimum scaled mark is equated to a value set by the examiners. If there is a mark of 0 it will remain a **scaled** mark of 0.
  - All other marks are scaled linearly between the maximum and minimum scaled marks.
  - The rank order of students in their final university assessments is maintained.

During this process the Board examiners take into account the challenging nature and high standard of the courses. The marks established by this scaling process are forwarded by the Board of Studies to the Universities Admissions Centre (UAC) to be subject to normal university scaling processes by the Technical Committee on Scaling. This means that Distinction Courses are accredited as two unit courses and are scaled using the same method as is used with other courses.

#### • **Universities Admission Index (UAI)**

The requirements for the Universities Admission Index (UAI) are determined by the universities. The UAI is calculated by the Universities Technical Committee on Scaling on behalf of the universities in NSW and the ACT.

#### ***Eligibility***

To be eligible for a UAI a student must complete at least 10 units (including at least two units of English) of Board Developed Courses for which there are formal examinations conducted by the Board of Studies.

The Board Developed Courses must include at least three courses of two units or greater and at least four subjects.

#### ***Calculation***

A candidate's UAI is calculated from the aggregate of scaled marks in the best 10 units in Board Developed HSC Courses comprising:

- the best two units of English; and
- the best eight units from the remaining units, subject to the provision that no more than two units of Category B courses be included.

[Note: Students wishing to have a UAI calculated must indicate this when entering for the HSC. Students who do not meet the above requirements will not be eligible for a UAI.]

The universities categorise Board Developed courses as either Category A or Category B. To have a UAI based on an aggregate of scaled marks in 10 HSC units, students must have completed at least eight Board Developed Category A units.

The UAI may include units accumulated by a candidate over a total time span of five years.

There is no restriction on the number of Distinction Courses that can be included in the calculation of the UAI.

#### ***How will my progress be assessed?***

Assessment for the Distinction Courses will take a variety of forms. Typically, the assessments will be based on written assignments, including essays and research projects. Comparative Literature also has an oral presentation that counts towards the student's final grade. The courses all have written examinations that count towards the final grade. The specific requirements for the assessment of each course are listed in the course information books that are sent to students at the commencement of the course. A summary of the assessment requirements for each course appears later in this booklet.

#### ***What feedback will I get on my progress during the course?***

During the year, the course coordinators are available to give students information about and assistance with their progress in the course. All assignments, projects and examinations are

marked by university personnel and/or members of course committees. Students receive feedback in the form of comments and grades from the markers and scores in each of the individual examinations. The exception to this is the final written Comparative Literature examination, which is held during the Higher School Certificate examination period.

The final grade for the Distinction Courses is reported on the Higher School Certificate Record of Achievement, which is delivered to students in January.

***What happens at the residentials?***

The residential programs are designed to provide input from specialist lecturers and/or stimulus material and to allow students the opportunity for face-to-face discussion with course coordinators and peers. The program will usually allow time for individual students to receive feedback on their progress from the course coordinator. Attendance at the residentials is a compulsory part of Distinction Course study.

More details on the residentials, as well as sample residential programs for each course, are included later in this booklet.

***Who can I go to for help with the work?***

In the first instance, students should call on the course coordinators for assistance with Distinction Course work. The coordinator may then direct the student's inquiry to another appropriate person.

***How much time will I need to devote to the course?***

The courses are run over one year and will require a minimum of 120 hours' study time.

***How do I find out more about studying a Distinction Course?***

The Board publishes information about Distinction Courses on its website [[www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au)] and in the *Board Bulletin*. Students who think they may be interested in studying a Distinction Course should inform their school of their interest.

# Philosophy Distinction Course

## Nature of the Course

The Distinction Course in Philosophy does not assume any previous study in this area. It is designed to offer accelerated students the opportunity for the development of philosophical skills applicable across the curriculum, to impart a knowledge of philosophy and to build on the knowledge, interests and reflective capabilities that students will bring to their study. The Distinction Course in Philosophy makes available the study of current and perennial questions about human existence and thought.

To engage in philosophical inquiry requires imagination, thoughtfulness, careful and critical examination, and the ability to reason well. It challenges our horizons and cultivates considered judgment. The course provides students with the opportunity to attain a level of competence in philosophy by acquiring the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are characteristic of philosophy. Whilst the course is pitched at a high level in selected areas, it is not exhaustive and is not intended to replace introductory courses traditionally offered to students in their first year of university. Rather, this course is specifically designed to meet the interests of accelerated students, the constraints of external delivery and the needs of contemporary education in a diverse society.

Commencing with fiction stories that provoke philosophical curiosity, the course continues with the consideration of a balanced range of issues, and students move on to develop their philosophical skills and explore more abstract questions through the reading of classical and contemporary sources. Areas and topics have been chosen to challenge and extend students, as well as for their importance and interest.

The course begins with Core Studies, comprising four compulsory modules and a reasoning workshop. This section requires students to develop the ability to formulate sustained, well-reasoned arguments and to examine central questions in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and political philosophy. Students then undertake Optional Studies, which are extensions of the four core modules, giving them the opportunity to investigate issues in greater depth. These studies are designed to increase students' capacities to analyse philosophical problems and to formulate their own positions in relation to these problems.

## Structure of the Course

The course is divided into Core Studies and Optional Studies. The Core consists of four compulsory modules and makes up two-thirds of the course time. The Optional Studies make up the remainder of the course. Students choose to study two options out of a possible four. Each option is an extension of one of the core modules. There are also three residentials, each of two days' duration.

The format of the course is:

- First residential  
Module 1 (Time and Cause) and Module 2 (Self Concept)
  
- Second residential  
Module 3 (Morality, Religion and Happiness) and Module 4 (Reality and Credibility)

➤ Third residential  
Optional Studies

Assessment for the course is by assignments and examination. The assessment scheme is summarised below:

Core Module 1 - Short written assignment	5%
Core Module 2 - Short written assignment	5%
Core Module 3 - Short written assignment	5%
Core Module 4 - Short written assignment or written test or viva test	5%
Core Modules 1–4 - Written examination	40%
Subtotal:	60%
Two Options - A written assignment on each option 20% each	
Each assignment to be 1500–2000 words	
Subtotal:	40%
TOTAL:	100%

### **Residential Schools**

There are three 2-day residential schools, at which attendance is compulsory. Residential schools provide students with the opportunity for face-to-face discussion and peer interaction, which is so important in philosophical inquiry. The first residential school includes a reasoning workshop to develop the vocabulary and skills needed for the formulation and critical evaluation of arguments. The second residential school provides an opportunity for discussion of issues and feedback on assignments. The third residential school offers workshops on the options and an opportunity for library research and discussion of the written assignments for the options.

#### ***First residential school***

(At the beginning of the course) This will include:

- an introduction to Philosophy
- lectures and workshops on reasoning
- an introduction to Module 1 (Time and Cause) and Module 2 (Self-concept)
- an introduction to library resources.

#### ***Second residential school***

(On completion of Core Modules 1 and 2) This will include:

- discussion of issues selected from Modules 1 and 2
- workshops on assignments
- workshops on writing and presenting arguments
- a preview of Module 3 (Morality, Religion and Happiness) and Module 4 (Reality and Credibility).

#### ***Third residential school***

(On completion of Core Modules 3 and 4) This will include:

- discussion of issues selected from Modules 3 and 4
- workshops to introduce the Options
- an introduction to writing research assignments.

## **Sample Residential School Program**

### ***Saturday***

9.00–9.30 am - Check-in  
9.30–10.10 am - Lecture 1 on Module Three: Introduction  
10.15–11.00 am - Group discussion on Lecture 1  
11.00–11.30 am - *Morning Tea*  
11.30 am–12.10 pm - Lecture on Module Three  
12.15–1.00 pm - Discussion  
1.00–2.00 pm - *Lunch*  
2.00–2.40 pm - Lecture on Module Three  
2.45–3.30 pm - Discussion  
3.30–4.00 pm - *Afternoon Tea*  
4.00–4.40 pm - Lecture on Module Two  
4.40–6.00 pm - Optional essay feedback  
6.00–7.00 pm - *Dinner*  
7.00–8.00 pm - Optional essay feedback  
8.00 pm – Film (video) relevant to course

### ***Sunday***

9.00–9.40 am - Discussion of film  
9.50–10.30 am- Lecture on Module Four  
10.30–11.00 am - *Morning Tea*  
11.10–11.45 am - Discussion  
11.50 am–12.30 pm - Lecture on Module Four  
12.30–2.00 pm - *Lunch*  
1.15–2.00 pm - Optional essay feedback  
2.00–2.45 pm - Discussion  
2.50–3.30 pm - Lecture  
3.30–3.50 pm - *Afternoon Tea*  
3.50–4.30 pm - General discussion on Module Four

# Comparative Literature Distinction Course

## Nature of the Course

Comparative Literature is designed as a challenging, high-level course suitable for exceptional students who are enthusiastic readers. The course will encourage students to broaden and extend their understanding and appreciation of literatures from different national, cultural and social contexts. It will provide opportunities for students to investigate a wide range of European and non-European literature by reading texts that have been influential in the ways cultures perceive themselves.

This course is one of a number of Distinction Courses developed as part of the Board of Studies' strategy to encourage excellence and to provide additional academic opportunities for gifted and talented students. It will prepare students for university and other further studies.

Comparative Literature is concerned with the intertextual study of literature produced in different national, cultural and social contexts. It seeks to explore how common concerns find their expression in the works of writers within disparate cultures. Some attention will also be paid to the ways in which elements of literature such as motif and story may cross cultural, linguistic and historical boundaries and be assimilated or appropriated through, for example, imitation or translation.

It is expected that, for most students, the literature studied will be in English or English translation, but will extend across different countries, cultures and periods. An example would be studies of literatures in English produced in post-colonial societies. However, study of literature on a comparative basis may also draw on a knowledge of languages other than English, and/or of translation theory. The reading of text in languages such as French, German or Japanese, or an examination and comparison of different English translations or versions of a variety of texts, provide examples of this area of study. A distinctive feature of the course is that texts will be studied in comparison with one another and the focus will be on the relations between texts and elements of those texts. The course will foster an interest in the social and literary functions of language and/or exploration of the nature of translation.

## Structure of the Course

The course consists of five modules. All students study the compulsory module 'Introduction to Comparative Literature' (Module A), then choose three of the other four modules offered (Module B – Nineteenth Century European Novel, Module C – Poetry and Religious Experience, Module D – Satiric Voices and Module E – Post Colonial Experience).

There are three residentials, each of two days' duration. The residentials are held after each of the first three modules, and are designed to enhance students' understanding of topics within the modules. Some modules require reading of a large number of short works, while others involve a small number of long works. Students need to think ahead and apportion their time sensibly. The schedule below shows approximately how the demands of the course are spread throughout the year.

*December* - Begin studying Module A;  
*January* - Write Assignment 1, Continue studying Module A, Write Assignment 2;  
First residential  
*February/March* - Work on first Optional Module;  
*April* - Complete readings and notes for first Optional Module;  
Second residential  
Complete first Optional Module essay  
*May* - Start second Optional Module;  
*June* - Complete readings and notes for second Optional Module;  
*July* - Complete second Optional Module essay;  
*August* - Work on readings and notes for third Optional Module;  
Third residential  
*September* - Complete readings and notes for third Optional Module, Write third Optional Module essay;  
*October* - Review Module A, revise for examination.

Assessment for the course includes written assignments, a written examination, and an oral presentation. The assessment scheme is shown below:

*Module A* - Two compulsory assignments of 1200 to 1500 words  
(The marks do not count towards the final result.)  
Oral Presentation 5%  
*Optional Module 1*- 1500 word assignment 15%  
*Optional Module 2*- 1500 word assignment 15%  
*Optional Module 3*- 1500 word assignment 15%  
*Whole Course* 3 hour examination 50%  
Total: 100%

## **Sample Residential School Program**

### ***First Residential***

*Note:* Students should have submitted one assignment and bring the next to the residential school where, if possible, it will be marked overnight. The oral presentation will be done at the residential school. Poems will be handed out on Saturday afternoon, and the presentation will take place on Sunday morning.

### ***Saturday***

9.00–10.30 am – Introduction, review of Module 1, feedback  
10.30–11.00 am - *Morning Tea*  
11.00 am–1.00 pm - ‘Period’  
1.00–2.00 pm - *Lunch*  
2.00–3.00 pm - Library Session  
3.00–4.00 pm - *Afternoon Tea*  
4.00–6.00 pm - Music / Art / Mythology; students given poems for oral presentations  
6.00–7.00 pm - *Dinner*  
7.00 pm – Film (video) relevant to the course

***Sunday***

9.00–10.30 am - Students' oral presentation of poems (Assessment Task)

10.30–11.00 am - *Morning Tea*

11.00 am–1.00 pm - Students' oral presentation of poems (Assessment Task)

1.00–2.00 pm - *Lunch*

2.00–3.00 pm - Translation and Adaptation

3.00–4.00 pm - *Afternoon Tea*

4.00–6.00pm - Discussion of remaining modules

6.00 pm - Finish

# **Cosmology Distinction Course**

## **Nature of the Course**

Humanity has, since the earliest times, attempted to explain the observations of the sky above us. To a great extent, the history of science has depended upon the development of cosmological thinking. Current scientific observations and much theoretical ingenuity are being directed towards a consistent view of the grand structure of the universe. These are exciting times, with scientists developing a unified view of the forces that mould the universe. We seem close to a synthesis of the presently disparate domains of particle physics and astronomy.

Cosmology students will be expected to develop an understanding of the historical, social, observational and theoretical aspects of cosmology. The course is designed to give an introduction to some of the most recent techniques and imaginative theories of modern science, with visits to Australian observatories and lectures by leading astronomers.

The Cosmology Distinction Course is one of three Distinction Courses developed by the Board of Studies to encourage excellence and to provide additional academic opportunities for gifted and talented students. All through the course, students are invited to read, think and explore beyond the provided materials. They are encouraged to use many sources when writing essays, both to develop their background in the subject, and to support the arguments they put forward. The emphasis is on students' own building of concepts, and development of intellectual models, rather than on repetition of derived knowledge.

Cosmology includes elements from the subject areas of History, Sociology and Mathematics as well as Physics and Astronomy. Students would usually have a background of science and mathematics, but this is not a prerequisite. Supplementary notes are provided to assist those who lack the necessary knowledge of science and mathematics.

The Cosmology Distinction Course allows the most talented students to exercise their minds in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding in a field of far greater scope than they have previously encountered.

## **Structure of the Course**

The course work is divided into nine modules. Study of these modules will be guided by the syllabus and by recommended reading over the first 27 weeks. There will also be two residenceals during this time. The course is taught through distance education and is supervised by university staff. A package of course materials is dispatched by Charles Sturt University by mid-January.

As far as possible, students are dealing with material from scientific publications. Where the original material depends heavily on mathematics, the writers have provided their interpretation, rather than expecting students to derive understanding from the original. Throughout the course, help is available from the course coordinator through phone or email. At the two residenceals, all Cosmology Distinction students can interact with lecturers and fellow students. Students will have the opportunity to discuss interesting features they have discovered in their study, and to ask questions of professionals in the field.

Each module will require about 11 hours' study over a three-week period. There will be six assignments during the study of the modules, but only three of these will contribute towards assessment. There is also a major project, which should take a further 8–10 weeks. For this project, each student will develop their own approach to a topic chosen from a list which will be available at the first residential. Students will get approval for their project following consultation and discussion with course supervisors at the second residential.

The format of the course is as follows:

Module 1 (The Scale of the Known Universe), Module 2 (The Contents of the Universe),  
Module 3 (Development of Cosmological Ideas);

First residential

Module 4 (Space and Time), Module 5 (Expansion and the Observed Redshifts), Module 6  
(Further Key Observations);

Second residential

Module 7 (What Are the Models?), Module 8 (The Big Bang), Module 9 (Where to Now?);

Major Project

Assessment for the course will be spread throughout the year.

An approximate time frame for the assessment program, showing the value for each task, is indicated below:

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Weeks 1–4</b>	<b>Weeks 5–18</b>	<b>Weeks 19–27</b>	<b>Weeks 28–37</b>
Assignments	10%	10%	10%	
Exams		10%	30%	
Project				30%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>30%</b>

## **Residential Schools**

There are two compulsory residential schools. The aims of the residential schools are for the students to meet each other, to visit some of Australia's world class astronomical facilities, to receive lectures and have discussions with professionals in the field, and to acquire the skills necessary to undertake the requirements of the course.

The first residential school is held at Coonabarabran from Friday to Tuesday in early February. Students are shown over optical and radio telescopes at Parkes, Siding Spring, Mopra and Narrabri. There are further lectures and night observing at the motel where the group is accommodated.

The second residential school is held in Sydney in late June or early July. Students are well advanced in the course at this stage. The aims of this school are therefore to consolidate the content of the course by lectures and discussions with active researchers in the fields of Astronomy and Cosmology. The form and subject matter of the major project is also discussed with each student.

## **Sample First Residential School Program**

(near quarter moon)

Tour of astronomical installations

### ***Friday***

9.00 am - Bus leaves Sydney (Central Station)  
10.15 am - Pick up group in Blue Mountains as required  
12.30 pm - Lunch; Pick up group at Bathurst  
3.00 pm - Parkes Radio Telescope  
4.00 pm - Leave for Warrumbungles Mountain Motel  
7.30 pm – arrive for dinner  
9.00 pm - Introduction to the Course; Communications;

### ***Saturday***

9.30 am - Lectures and discussion at motel  
12.00 pm - Lunch at motel  
1.00 pm - Bus to Siding Spring Mountain  
1.30pm - Visit 3.9m Anglo-Australian telescope  
4.00 pm - Visit Mopra  
6.00 pm - Return to motel  
6.30pm - Dinner  
8.00 pm - Visual observing (weather permitting) at motel (it is a dark site) with small telescopes

### ***Sunday***

8.00 am - Bus to Narrabri (Paul Wild Observatory).  
10.00 am - Visitors' centre; lecture and videos  
11.30 am - Tour of Australia Telescope (Radio telescopes)  
12.30 pm - Lunch at barbeque area near visitors' centre  
2.00 pm - Inspect AT antenna during maintenance period  
3.00 pm - Visit SUSI site  
4.00 pm - Return to Coonabarabran motel by 6pm  
8.00 pm - Visual observing (weather permitting)

### ***Monday***

9.00 am - Lectures and discussion at motel.  
12.00 pm - Lunch at motel  
1.00pm - Bus to Siding Spring Mountain.  
1.30 pm - Exploratory (Visitors' Centre)  
2.00 pm - Visit 2.3m MSSSO telescope  
4.00 pm - Visit AAO Schmidt Telescope  
6.00 pm - Return to motel  
8.00 pm - Visual observing (weather permitting)

### ***Tuesday***

8.00 am - Bus leaves for Sydney  
11.00 am - Driver rest at Orange  
1.00 pm - On to Bathurst  
5.00 pm - Sydney to disembark at Strathfield Station

## **Sample Second Residential School Program**

### ***Friday***

7.00–9.00 pm - Welcome and Discussions on the course

### ***Saturday***

9.30–10.30 am - Lecture 1

10.30 am–12.00 pm - Discussions and questions

12.00pm–2.00pm - *Lunch*

2.00–3.30 pm - Lecture 2

3.30–5.30pm - Discussion and questions:

5.30–7.30pm - Course dinner – students, lecturers and course organisers

### ***Sunday***

9.00–10.30 am - Lecture 3

10.30 am–12.00 pm - Discussions and questions

12.00pm–2.00pm - *Lunch*

2.00–3.30 pm - Lecture 4

4.00–5.00pm - Individual discussion of major projects

5.00 pm - Travel to airport, trains or homes