Regulations for approved programmes of study

A1.1. General Regulations for approved programmes of study

A1.1.1 Definition of a programme of study

A 'programme of study' is the approved curriculum followed by an individual student: it may be identical with a course, or be one of a number of standard routes available within a larger course scheme, or it may be unique to the student. In all cases, however, the programme of study must satisfy the requirements set out in this section.

All programmes of study must be subject to course regulations approved by the relevant validating authority as part of the validation process. Where a programme of study is the only available route on a course, or where possible routes are clearly defined, these course regulations will be able to cover all the requirements set out below. Where an individual student programme is approved that is not fully in accordance with the course regulations, the overall regulations for a course scheme must be supplemented by a statement relating to the individual programme.

Whichever is used, each approved programme must be governed by written statements, available to students and to the University, setting out as minimum:

- the title of the programme of study, if any, and the award(s) to which it leads;
- the planned duration and mode(s) of study of the programme;
- the aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the programme;
- the curriculum and structure of the programme;
- the regulations on the admission, progression and assessment of students.

These statements may not be changed without the approval of the University, in accordance with its quality assurance procedures. No changes may be made to regulations on the progression or assessment of students without formal consultation with the students currently enrolled on the course who may be directly affected by the proposed change. Any such changes which affect the regulations for the assessment of students for an award must also have been advised to the approved external examiner(s).

Faculties are required to provide the Academic Policy and Quality Office with a copy of a definitive document for each course or course scheme as soon as the course has been formally approved, and to provide an amended version whenever any change is made to the course.
A1.1.2 The title of the programme of study

Where the title of a programme of study is to appear on the award certificate conferred by the University, that title must be approved in accordance with the University's requirements. The title must be simple, and accurate; it must accord, as a description of course content, with the normal expectations of higher education bodies, relevant professional bodies, students and employers about the level of knowledge and skill to be expected from a person holding such a qualification.

A title may be given to an approved programme leading to any taught award. Programme titles that will appear on certificates should be simple, single-subject titles whenever possible.

Where students study more than one subject, up to two separate fields of study may be identified in the title. The award of a degree in 'combined studies' may be approved.

Single subject titles may be used where subsidiary studies are not substantial enough to merit special mention.
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A1.1.3 The planned duration and mode of study of the programme

General considerations

The planned length of the programme must be related to the normal duration specified in the definition of the award as set out in section A2 below, and the minimum and maximum periods within which a student must normally complete the programme and associated assessments (including resits) must be specified. For any mode of study, the level of knowledge and skills required at the entry point, the curriculum, teaching arrangements, time available for students' private study, and the length and nature of any supervised work experience must be designed to match the duration requirements of the award.

Part-time study

The duration of a programme of study designed for students who are not studying full time will in all cases be longer than the minimum full-time duration for the course.

Sandwich degrees

1. A designated sandwich course leads to a University award 'in the sandwich mode', and these words will appear on the award certificate. A programme of study approved as leading to the Degree or Honours Degree in the sandwich mode must include not less than 36 weeks of supervised work experience in addition to the period required for the full-time award. Course teams are encouraged to make provision for an alternative full-time award on all sandwich degree schemes, to be awarded to students who are unable, for valid reasons, to undertake or complete the sandwich element of the course. Programmes leading to such full-time awards should have objectives that can be achieved without the sandwich element.

2. The period of supervised work experience must form a compulsory element of a programme of study leading to a sandwich degree; its objectives must be specified and related to the objectives of the whole programme; the performance of students must be assessed; and satisfactory completion of and performance in the period of supervised work experience must be a requirement for the award.
Modern language degrees

In full-time degree courses in modern languages, a period of residence abroad must be an integral part of the course. Where two main languages are studied to the same level, a student must spend a minimum of six consecutive months in the country of each language. Where only one main language is studied, or where the two periods are consecutive, the period may be shortened to not less than one academic year altogether. Exceptionally, an individual student may be exempted from the period abroad where the student's prior knowledge and skills already meet the learning objectives of that period or where circumstances dictate that the period abroad cannot be undertaken and appropriate alternative arrangements can be made to fulfil the learning objectives. These individual exceptions will not mean that a full-time modern language degree does not have to meet the requirement to include a period abroad in its validated structure (see also A2.3.4).
A1.1.4 Aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the programme

1. A programme of study must have stated aims, objectives and learning outcomes which the curriculum, structure, teaching methods and forms of assessment are designed to fulfil.

2. The aims will include the development to the level required for the award of a body of knowledge and skills appropriate to the field of study and reflecting academic developments in that field; these are course-specific aims.

3. The aims must also include the University's general educational aims, the development of students' intellectual and imaginative powers, their understanding and judgement, their problem-solving skills, their ability to communicate, their ability to see relationships within what they have learned and to perceive their field of study in a broader perspective. The programme must aim to stimulate an enquiring, analytical and creative approach, encouraging independent judgement and critical self-awareness.

4. The statement of objectives must show how the programme will fulfil the aims. The statement of course-specific objectives will specify the knowledge and skills appropriate to the field of study and identify the ways in which these will be developed and evaluated in the students. The statement of general objectives will identify the ways in which the students' transferable intellectual skills will be developed and evaluated, in particular their ability to:
   
   a. communicate clearly in speech, writing and other appropriate modes of expression;
   
   b. argue rationally and draw independent conclusions based on a rigorous, analytical and critical approach to data, demonstration and argument;
   
   c. apply what has been learned;
   
   d. demonstrate an awareness of the programme of study in a wider context.

5. Curricular elements will have their own aims and objectives and each element will contribute to the overall aims and objectives of the course or programme. The aims and objectives of a curricular element will be
expressed in terms of learning outcomes and the assessment of the element should test student achievement of these.
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A1.1.5 The curriculum and structure of the programme

The curriculum, like the title, must be appropriate to the aims of the course and to the level of the award. The structure must provide for the progression of the student from the level of knowledge and skill required at admission to the level required for the award.
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A1.1. General Regulations for approved programmes of study

A1.1.6 Regulations on the admission of students to a programme

The admission regulations must accord with the University's requirements relating to the standard of the award, as set out in section A2 below and must describe the basis on which a student will be admitted to the beginning or to subsequent stages of the programme of study, by:

1. identifying the knowledge and skills required at admission and relating these to the length, content and objectives of the programme;

2. setting out the criteria and means by which the suitability of the student for admission will be judged;

3. setting out, where appropriate, the procedures to be used in assessing for the purposes of more detailed classification (such as honours or distinction classification) any relevant previous work of students admitted with specific credit.
A1.1.7 Regulations on progression

1. Progression regulations must set out the way(s) in which students progress through the programme, and identify the elements that are compulsory, optional or alternative.

2. Where the objectives of the programme are such that attendance is compulsory for certain elements, the regulations must give details of the attendance requirements to be met by students.

3. The regulations must give details of any formal arrangements designed to monitor students' progress and warn students of possible failure.

4. Regulations dealing with assessments which do not formally contribute to the recommendation of an award must specify what form the assessment will take and what provision is made for retrieval of initial failure and for the consequences of unretrieved failure. The University does not require external examiners to be associated with such assessments.
A1.1. General Regulations for approved programmes of study

A1.1.8 Regulations on assessment

1. The assessment regulations for a programme of study must state the basis on which students will be assessed for an award, relating the assessment requirements to the University's general educational aims and objectives, the aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the programme, the standard of the award, and any special assessment requirements associated with the award.

2. The assessment regulations must cover all assessments, at whatever point in the programme they are undertaken, that formally contribute to the recommendation of an award of the University. Where the course structure is such that students may proceed from one level or stage to another and qualify for an award of the University at each stage, the assessments for each level will be assessments for an award. External examiners must be associated with all assessments for an award in accordance with the arrangements determined by the University.

3. Regulations on assessment for an award must:
   a. identify all the elements that will be assessed including any assessed supervised work experience;
   b. specify when and how each of these elements will be assessed by internal and external examiners;
   c. specify which or how many elements must be passed to obtain an award and what weighting each carries in the assessments;
   d. identify any elements that may in no circumstances be the subject of compensation for failure;
   e. specify the minimum and maximum number of elements to be attempted;
   f. state the criteria for the recommendation of each award or level of award to which the programme may lead. Provision for the recommendation of a Distinction may be made in the regulations for all taught awards except the Degree with Honours. The Degree with Honours is classified (First Class, Upper Second Class, Lower Second Class, Third Class) with provision for a Pass award.
g. Subject to A1.9 below, specify what provisions will be made to enable students to make good an initial failure.

h. Set out the composition (including the minimum number of external examiners) and terms of reference of the Examination Committee and any subsidiary examination committees.

4. (With effect from 2010/11.) It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all assessment deadlines are met or that approval for an extension has been granted in advance of the original deadline. Any assessment submitted after the deadline (or the extended deadline) will be awarded zero marks.
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A1.1. General Regulations for approved programmes of study

A1.1.9 Reassessment regulations

1. General considerations:

   a. The regulations must require that the reassessment of a candidate for an award shall normally take place within the maximum length of the course.

   b. Course assessment regulations must specify the requirements to be satisfied when a student is to be reassessed for an award. These will normally be the same as the requirements for assessment except that provision may be made for marks or grades for successfully completed assessments to be carried forward, subject to the requirements of 2 below.

2. Master's degrees and postgraduate diploma.

   Assessment regulations for the award of a Master's degree or postgraduate diploma must specify that candidates who fail at the first attempt may be reassessed at the discretion of the examiners in any or all of the elements of assessment once only.
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A1.1. General Regulations for approved programmes of study

A1.1.10 Additional regulations on the length and structure of programmes

General considerations

1. The definitions of awards given in A1.2 below state the normal minimum planned length of a programme of study in terms of full-time study in academic years based on a particular level of entry. Courses may need to be longer or more intensive to reflect the knowledge and skills of particular groups of students on entry or to provide for accelerated modes to study, provided that they are designed to enable students to fulfil the objectives of the programme and reach the required standard. Programmes of study may be designed to have more than one entry point in order to accommodate students with different levels of prior knowledge and skill.

2. Where the University course and a BTEC or SCOTVEC course are designed to form a continuous integrated programme and where students by the end of the second year or the equivalent stage have not only achieved the BTEC or SCOTVEC award but have also satisfied the objectives and reached the standard required by the University for that stage of a degree course, the length of the total programme may be not less than the minimum normally required for the degree.

3. An academic year for most courses is a period of not less than 33 weeks. The University expects account to be taken of the need for students to have time for private study and consolidation.
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A1.1.11 Part-time programmes of study

1. The length of a part-time programme will in all cases be greater than that of an equivalent full-time course, but the precise length will depend on factors such as the pace of study and whether or not students' time away from their studies is being spent in activities that support those studies. A part-time programme must provide students with adequate support and with reasonable time for private study and consolidation.

2. Courses may also be designed with a mixture of full-time and part-time study or with opportunities for students to move from one mode to another. Their lengths will be based on the proportion of full-time and part-time study.
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A1.1.12 Courses including work-based learning

3. Learning based in a workplace may be wholly included in the normal full-time length of a course where the University is satisfied that the tuition, supervision, course content and resources provided for students are of the standard required by the University and appropriate to the fulfilment of the objectives of the programme.

4. Some courses are designed to fulfil the requirements of a professional or licensing body in addition to the requirements for a University award, and incorporate periods of work experience for this purpose, normally adding considerably to the minimum period of study required for the University award. In such courses some elements both of study and experience may have dual objectives, satisfying both University and professional requirements, while other elements will be designed to satisfy either one or the other.

5. In order to ensure that students who fail to satisfy professional requirements may still be given appropriate credit for any academic achievement, the structure of the course and the design of the assessments may be such that the elements designed only to satisfy professional requirements are clearly identified, and criteria are established whereby students who satisfy the requirements for an academic award may be recommended for such an award without being recommended for a professional qualification or licence to practise.

6. Where appropriate such a course may lead to awards with different titles to distinguish those who have gained a professional qualification from those who have not.
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A1.1.13 Structure of programmes leading to degrees with and without Honours

1. The Honours Degree provides the main reference point for the University’s definitions of awards.

2. The University wishes all students enrolled on its first-degree programmes to have the opportunity to reach Honours Degree standard. However the University recognises (i) that some students will not be able to reach this standard but will be able to satisfy the requirements for a Degree without Honours, (ii) that some programmes of study will provide an opportunity for students to reach the standard of the Degree without Honours but not the standard required for Honours.

Honours students are expected to demonstrate a greater capacity for sustained independent work at high level, but this may be expressed as a requirement to complete a greater quantity of high-level work.

3. The University therefore recommends that degree courses should be designed in one of the following ways to provide students with the greatest possible opportunity to reach the highest award of which they are capable:

a. Where a programme is designed to lead to the Degree without Honours only, the University will provide, if necessary through collaboration with another institution, a supplementary programme, with an emphasis on high-level independent work, which able students could follow after, or in parallel with the later stages of, a Degree course to achieve Honours.

b. A course may be designed to lead to Degrees either with or without Honours. A course of this type will be known as a BA/(or BSc etc) BA(Hons) course and there will be no provision for the award of Distinction for the Degree without Honours.

c. Where a programme is designed to lead primarily to an Honours degree the structure and the weighting of the elements of assessment contributing to the award should be such that criteria can be established for the award of the Degree without Honours as well as First, Second and Third Class Honours. The award of the Degree without Honours will require fulfilment of the minimum objectives of the course, while the higher classifications will demand increasingly high levels of performance demonstrating the ability to analyze, synthesise and apply creatively what has
been learned on the course. A student's fulfilment of the criteria for the award of the Degree without Honours may be demonstrated either through performance across the whole range of assessments or by other appropriate means. For example while it will normally be the case that all compulsory elements must be passed for Honours, it may be possible for students who fail in some elements to be considered to have fulfilled requirements equivalent to those of a Degree without Honours and therefore be eligible for that award. A course of this type will be known as a BA (or BSc etc) (Hons) course and there will be no provision for the award of Distinction.

4. The University believes that students should have opportunities (i) to study at their own pace and (ii) to redeem an initial failure. However the University also considers it necessary to limit these opportunities in order to protect the standard of its awards. Courses should therefore be designed for students to complete their studies (including any resits) within a certain standard length of time; where appropriate, further provision may then be made for individual students, at the institution's discretion, to complete their studies in a shorter time, or suspend, transfer, or defer completion of their studies.

5. **Intermediate awards and the University transcript.** The University also wishes students to be able to gain credit for whatever studies they have successfully completed. Undergraduate degree courses may, therefore, be structured to allow for the award of the Certificate of Higher Education after one full-time academic year (or the equivalent) and the Diploma of Higher Education after two full-time academic years or the equivalent. Course regulations may be designed to allow entry and exit at different levels. The intermediate awards of the Certificate of Higher Education or Diploma of Higher Education will be available to students who have fulfilled the requirements for that award but who are unable to progress to, or have failed to fulfil the requirements for, a higher award. Students who achieve some academic success, but do not qualify for an award will be given a University transcript, which will specify the credit points obtained, where appropriate.
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A1.1.14 Postgraduate taught courses

Postgraduate courses may also be designed to provide maximum flexibility. As long as the programme of study as a whole meets the requirement of the standard of the award and a student's achievement of that standard can be confirmed by an approved Examination Committee, provision may be made for students to gain credit for workplace-based study and experience. Schemes may be modular or credit-based and may allow progression from a Postgraduate Certificate to a Postgraduate Diploma to a Master's degree. Course regulations may be designed to allow entry and exit at different levels. The intermediate awards of the Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma will be available to students who have fulfilled the requirements for that award but who are unable to progress to, or have failed to fulfil the requirements for, a higher award. Students who achieve some academic success, but do not qualify for an award will be given a University transcript, which will specify the credit points obtained, where appropriate.