B3. Open Award Regulations

An Open Award is an award achieved by accreditation of a student’s prior learning and through current learning as demonstrated by completing learning contracts or passing course units or modules. The Open Award is differentiated from combined study because it includes learning experiences other than these wholly achieved through existing Oxford Brookes University modules.

1. Title of award

1.1. The title of the award which a student on the University’s Open Award Scheme will receive shall be agreed before the student completes any assessment on the Scheme and shall reflect the approved learning outcomes of the individual student programme. The title shall be changed in those cases where the original learning contract between the student and the University is re-negotiated at a later stage in such a way that the content of the student’s programme changes significantly.

1.2. The title of an Open Award shall be different from the titles of existing awards and those of previous awards offered by the University, except in cases where the overall learning outcomes and essential programme requirements of a student’s Open Award programme are the same as those for an existing named award.

2. Level of Awards

2.1. To be awarded a Certificate of Higher Education a student must have obtained at least 120 credits at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level 4.

2.2. To be awarded a Diploma of Higher Education a student must have obtained at least 120 at level 4 and 120 credits at level 5/6.

2.3. To be awarded a Degree without Honours a student must have obtained at least 120 credits at level 4 and 180 credits at level 5/6.

2.4. To be awarded a Degree with Honours a student must have obtained at least 120 credits at level 1 and 240 credits at level 5/6, including at least 60 credits at Honours level (6).

2.5. To be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or a Masters Degree a student must have obtained 60, 120 or 180 credits at level 7 respectively.

3. Individual student programmes

3.1. Each student will normally be admitted to one of the Faculties of the University, which will become the lead Faculty responsible for that student’s Open Award programme.

3.2. The Open Award programme and the appropriate regulations for an individual student shall be agreed and approved by the Open Award Board before the student completes any assessment.

3.3. An individual student programme may include modules and/or other credit rated course units from any of the University’s taught programmes and by agreement credit achieved through other institutions.
Student accessing Brookes modules and course units must meet any specific entry requirements for the particular module or course element.

3.4. Student programmes must include credit achieved through the University which is equivalent to one third of the credit required for the award.

4. APL AND APEL

4.1. The University’s CATS regulations regarding APEL will apply: the APEL component of a student’s programme shall not normally exceed two thirds of the credit required for the award.

4.2. The process of devising an APEL submission and designing the student programme may itself provide students with an opportunity to gain specific credits within that student’s programme.

4.3. The examination committee for approving the AP(E)L components shall be identified when agreeing the student’s programme, and shall be the same as the examination committee responsible for recommending the student for an award.

5. Generic Learning Outcomes

5.1. In order to ensure the comparability of standards across the University, generic learning outcomes for specific levels of award will determine the criteria for the approval of individual student programmes.

6. Requirements for particular awards

6.1. BA (Hons)/BSc (Hons): Students on Open Award programmes leading to Honours degrees must pass 60 credits of Honours component (level 6).

6.2. Masters Degrees:
   All Masters degree programmes shall contain a significant element of research methods training. Students on Open Award programmes leading to a Master’s degree must pass a compulsory element of advanced independent work, ie a dissertation or project, supervised by a member of the University’s staff, which shall normally comprise a minimum of 50 credits.

7. Period of Registration

7.1. The maximum period of registration for a student on the Open Award Scheme shall be the same as the maximum period of registration for the current part-time mode of an equivalent programme/course offered by the student’s lead Faculty. This maximum will be reduced for each individual student pro rata to that student’s APEL credit. The ‘Admission with Credit Schedule’ in the Undergraduate Modular Programme Handbook shall be used as a guide. If a Faculty does not offer an equivalent programme/course in part-time mode, the Faculty shall define the maximum period of registration for its students on Open Award programmes when that Faculty applies, through the appropriate validation procedure, to participate in the University’s Open Award Scheme.

8. Entry Requirements

8.1. The general University regulations governing entry requirements shall apply.

9. Progressing

9.1. A student on the Open Award Scheme must complete a minimum number of credits in an academic year in order to be eligible to enrol the following academic year. This minimum shall normally be 45 credits per academic year. In addition a student must complete a minimum of 90 credits over two consecutive academic years. This condition may only be waived by the examination committee of the student’s lead Faculty under special circumstances, and on condition that the student’s total programme can be completed within the maximum registration period.

10. Assessment and external examiners

10.1. Every element of an individual student’s Open Award programme shall fall within the competence and expertise of:
• the University’s internal examination committees; and
• the University’s existing external examiners.

10.2. Assessment will be carried out by Faculties’ existing undergraduate and postgraduate examination committees. The appropriate examination committee in the lead Faculty shall have responsibility for recommending the awards for individual students. The appropriate committee shall be identified as part of the process for approving individual student programmes. In the case of undergraduate awards this recommendation shall be made to the Modular Examinations Committee and in the case of postgraduate awards it shall be made to the Academic Board.

10.3. Assessments to be carried out by an Examination Committee must be agreed in writing by the start of the term in which the Committee meets.

10.4. For undergraduate awards the grading scheme shall be as determined in the Undergraduate Modular Programme.

10.5. The classification of Open Awards which lead to Honours Degrees shall be consistent with the University's regulations covering degree classification for the undergraduate modular programme.

10.6. Merit and Distinction grades will be awarded to postgraduate programmes within the Open Award Scheme following the rules in the University’s Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes.

11. Medical and other evidence of valid reasons for poor performance

11.1. The Examination Committee shall operate the regulations for the Undergraduate Modular Programme for all undergraduate student programmes or the regulations for the appropriate postgraduate programme agreed when the student’s programme was approved.

12. Quality Assurance

12.1. The Open Award Scheme will be monitored and reviewed by the Open Award Board using the normal University quality assurance procedures and the report of the annual reviews will be submitted to the appropriate University Committees.

13. Approval and Operation

13.1. Approval - In this context approval means the procedure by which the University admits a Faculty to the Open Award Scheme, i.e. allows it to become the lead Faculty for individual student Open Award programmes.

13.2. The approval procedure whereby a Faculty is admitted to the University’s Open Award Scheme is separate and distinct from the procedures through which individual student programmes are agreed.

13.3. The conditions for approval which a Faculty must meet if it is to be admitted to the University’s Open Awards Scheme shall normally include:-
• having an appropriate programme of staff development in place;
• having experience in operating work-based learning and/or having experience of supporting students whose learning is wholly or partly based off-campus;
• having experience of delivering and assessing taught courses at the appropriate level;
• making appropriate arrangements to support students studying on Open Award programmes.

13.4. A Faculty’s application to be admitted to the University’s Open Award Scheme shall include the following information:-
• level(s) at which Faculty proposes to participate in the Open Award Scheme (eg undergraduate and/or postgraduate);
• specify the awards which Faculty proposes to offer under the Open Award Scheme;
• name(s) of Senior Tutor of Faculty’s Open Awards;
• proposed start date of Faculty’s participation in the University's Open Award Scheme, ie. Date on which Faculty aims to start enrolling students for Open Awards;
• systems of student support that will be in place;
• specification of the procedure for agreeing individual student programmes;
• fees;
• evidence of demand for Open Awards;
• resourcing required to develop, launch and run the proposed Open Awards programmes, including any additional teaching and support staffing, staff development, expertise, facilities and equipment, learning and teaching materials, and marketing and promotion necessary in the first five year - specify how this will be provided;
• existing arrangements and relationships with external organisations which will contribute to the Faculty’s ability to provide Open Awards, eg. mentoring relations and collaborative partnership arrangements;
• an Open Awards Handbook and Operations manual.

13.5. The approval of a Faculty’s admission to the University’s Open Award Scheme will be carried out by the Open Award Board.

14. Open Award Board

14.1. The Open Award Board will report to APQC and its responsibilities shall include:-
• developing the University’s Open Award Scheme, including the sharing of good practice;
• approving the admission of Faculties to the Open Award Scheme
• monitoring and approval of student programmes;
• considering regulations for the operation of the Open Award Scheme;
• advising Faculties about the operation of the Scheme in the light of Faculties’ annual reviews;
• liaising with external bodies;
• quality assurance processes including an annual review.

14.2. The members of the Open Award Board will include a range of experienced academics as well as a number of Open Award Senior Tutors from each Faculty:
• Pro Vice Chancellor Academic Development
• Co-ordinator of the Open Award
• Senior Tutor(s) from participating Faculty(ies)
• Continuing Professional Development Advisor (internal)
• Continuing Professional Development Advisor(s) (external)
• A Head of Quality Assurance