1. Authority

These regulations apply to all programmes of study leading to the award of a Foundation Degree. The University’s Core Regulations also apply to these programmes, and will take precedence in the event of any conflict between the Core Regulations and the Programme Regulations. The sections below set out the specific arrangements for Foundation Degrees.

Foundation Degree programmes are normally delivered through collaborative arrangements with the University’s partner Further Education Colleges (through the Associate Colleges Partnership), as an important element of the University’s approach to widening participation in higher education within the region (the procedures for the approval of such arrangements are set out in the University’s Quality & Standards Handbook). Programme and Liaison Managers must ensure that individual Programme Regulations are set out clearly in the relevant Programme Handbook, and that they are consistent with the requirements of the University Regulations.

2. Characteristics of Foundation degrees

Foundation Degrees are vocational qualifications which are intended to integrate academic and work-based learning, through collaboration with employers. They are designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge relevant to their employment, thereby meeting the needs of both employers and employees. They also provide a route to higher-level study for students who may not previously have considered entering higher education.

Foundation Degree programmes should be designed with significant employer involvement, and opportunities for work-based learning should be an integral part of the curriculum. This will ensure that the programme meets the professional and educational needs of its target students, and reflects any relevant professional or occupational standards within the industry or employment sector. Work-related and transferable skills should be underpinned by appropriate theoretical study, to enable students to be effective in achieving their potential in the work place and in furthering their career.

A key reference point for the development of Foundation Degree programmes at the University is the Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark (2010), published by the Quality Assurance Agency for HE, to which Programme Development Teams and programme approval panels must refer. The FDQB describes the defining characteristics of Foundation Degrees as: employer involvement, accessibility, articulation and progression, flexibility, and partnership.

3. Admissions standards

As with any other programme of study leading to a University award, the specific entry requirements for individual programmes must be set out in the approved Programme Specification which is confirmed through the programme approval process. Target groups for recruitment will vary according to the nature of the programme, but entrants to Foundation Degree programmes should normally meet one of the following three sets of requirements with respect to entry qualifications:

i. a current role in an appropriate workplace setting, and a line manager’s letter of support and recommendation;
ii. a minimum of one pass at A-level or 6-unit Vocational A-level, plus three passes at GCSE (grades A–C), or O-level (grades A–C) normally including Mathematics and English Language;

iii. a National Certificate or Diploma or other equivalent qualification, such as GNVQ/NVQ or other Level 3 vocational qualifications.

**Qualification equivalents**

Exceptionally – and depending upon the requirements of the programme - applicants who can demonstrate that they have the knowledge and abilities equivalent to those possessed by holders of the qualifications listed above may be admitted with dispensation from the requirement to possess those qualifications. Where this may be possible, the procedure to be undertaken to assess the equivalence of a candidate’s skills for entry to the programme must be described in the Programme Specification.

Other level 2 qualifications which are considered acceptable in place of GCSE/O level English Language and/or Mathematics should also be stated in the Programme Specification. However, potential students should be advised of any limits to their future progression to higher level study as a consequence of not holding the formal qualifications.

**Professional requirements**

If an accrediting professional body, or the profession/industry in which graduates of the programme will be employed, have specific additional entry requirements, these should be clearly stated in the programme specification and information provided to potential applicants on how they will be expected to demonstrate that they meet the requirements.

**Interviews**

Applicants may be interviewed prior to being accepted onto a programme – if diagnostic tests are to be carried out at this stage in order to assess applicants’ support needs with respect to academic writing and numeracy skills, this should be stated in the Programme Specification and in any information provided to applicants.

**English Language Requirements**

Applicants whose first language is not English must also demonstrate that their level of English is acceptable, by achieving a score in a recognised test such as:

- British Council IELTS: normally minimum level 6.0 overall with a minimum of 6.0 in the reading and writing components;
- TOEFL: minimum score of 550 paper-based, 213 computer-based, or 80 internet-based.

**Admission with Credit**

AP(E)L is an important element of admission to Foundation Degree programmes. Applicants with relevant prior certificated or experiential learning may be admitted with credit, for up to a maximum of 150 credits, such that at least 90 level 5 credits must be earned on the Oxford Brookes programme in order to qualify for the final award. Applications for the award of credit must be made in writing following discussion with the Programme Manager and the Liaison Manager. Documentary evidence will be required in support of the application (see also regulation A2.5 on the Accreditation of Prior Learning).

4. **Credit requirements**

The award carries 120 credits at level 4 and 120 credits at level 5. To qualify for the award of a Foundation Degree, a student must, within six years of first registering, achieve 120 credits at level 4 and 120 credits at level 5.

5. **Duration of study**

A Foundation Degree programme is designed to be completed in 2 years of full-time study or 3 years of part-time study. To qualify for the award in either mode of study the student must fulfil the award requirements within a maximum of six years from initial registration.
6. Assessment

The overall pass mark for all modules contributing to Foundation Degree programmes is 40%. If a module has more than one assessment element, the marks awarded for each element are averaged to calculate the overall module mark.

However, a module assessment strategy may state that to obtain an overall pass, a minimum (stated) mark must be obtained in all elements of assessment, with an overall module mark of no less than 40%. Where this is the case, it must be approved through the normal approval process, as set out in the Quality & Standards Handbook, and should be clearly stated in the module descriptors and information provided to students in module handbooks.

As an indication of student progress and for inclusion in the final transcript, an Examination Committee may award grades for modules according to the grading scheme applying to the Undergraduate Modular Programme.

Progression within the programme

The following requirements apply for progression within the programme:

- in order to complete satisfactorily a year of full-time study, a student must pass at least 90 credits during the year.
- in order to complete satisfactorily a year of part-time study, a student must pass at least 45 credits during the year.
- the Examination Committee may require a student to withdraw who does not pass at least 45 credits in any two successive semesters of study.
- the Examination Committee may require a student to withdraw if, after taking a required module three times, they have not achieved the required pass mark.

Re-assessment

A student who achieves between 30 and 39% on a module will be awarded the R grade and shall be entitled to re-assessment. Only one resit or resubmission attempt is allowed for each piece of assessment for each module.

Re-assessment involves either re-examination or the submission of further coursework for assessment, or a combination of both. When a specified mark must be achieved in one or more individual components, these marks must be achieved in order to pass at re-assessment. If the Examination Committee decides that other criteria for a pass mark are to be used, the student must be informed before they register for re-assessment.

At re-assessment a maximum of 40% (P) will be awarded unless the resit is in recognition of mitigating circumstances, in which case the student will be awarded the higher of the marks obtained in either the original assessment or the re-assessment.

A student failing to achieve an overall mark of 30% in a module will be required to retake the module and will be awarded grade F. When retaking the module, the student is required to register to take the entire module again, for which a fee is payable – they are required to attend all classes and to take all assessments involved. All the marks awarded will be recorded. Students are allowed up to two retake attempts per module.

If the requirements of an accrediting professional body are more stringent with respect to re-assessment than the rules set out within these regulations, the requirements that relate to the programme should be clearly stated in the programme and module specifications and the handbooks provided to students.

7. Award classification

A Foundation Degree may be classified as Pass, Merit or Distinction. To pass the award, a student must achieve an overall average mark of at least 40%. To obtain a Distinction classification a student must achieve an average of 70% or more over the 120 graded credits at level 5. A Merit classification is awarded to students who achieve an average of between 60-69% over the 120 graded credits at level 5.

From September 2014 entry, students will be provided with a Grade Point Average alongside their degree classification.
The Programme Specification must indicate how the final award classification will be calculated for students who are admitted with credit. The average mark for the award classification of a student gaining entry with credit should be calculated on the total number of modules studied on the Oxford Brookes programme.

Exit awards

A Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) is available as an exit award for students who pass, within a period of three years, modules worth at least 120 credits, but who are unable to complete the full Foundation Degree programme. Any student wishing to be a candidate for a Certificate of Higher Education must register for the award before or during the semester in which he or she expects to complete the programme requirements. The Certificate is not available to students intending to complete the Foundation Degree.

The Certificate of Higher Education may be classified as Pass, Merit or Distinction on the basis of their average mark over the 120 credits studied and passed. The award is passed by achieving an overall average mark of 40% or above. To obtain a Distinction a student must achieve an average of 70% or more over the 120 Credits. The average will be calculated on the modules passed up to and including the semester in which the regulations for the CertHE are first satisfied. A Merit grade is awarded to students who achieve an average score of between 60-69% for these modules.

8. Progression to Honours level study

A Foundation Degree is a recognised higher education qualification in its own right. However, a key characteristic of a Foundation Degree is that it also provides a route to study at Honours degree level. A progression route, or routes, through which Foundation Degree graduates may study for a Bachelors Degree with Honours must be clearly identified at the point of approval of a new Foundation Degree programme, and the programme documentation must clearly describe the requirements for progression to level 6 study. Identified progression routes may either be onto level 6 of an existing Honours degree, or a specially designed level 6 top-up programme.

As a general rule, the additional programme (120 credits at level 6) required for an Honours degree should allow students to graduate within a further 15 months of full time study or 30 months of part time study (including any bridging requirements). In the Brookes undergraduate programme, this requires the successful completion of a minimum of 90 credits at level 6.

The Foundation Degree qualification is located at level 5 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, as is the Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE). However, because of the requirement for the inclusion of significant amounts of work-based learning in a Foundation Degree programme, the learning outcomes achieved by these graduates may not be exactly equivalent to levels 4 and 5 of an Honours degree. Foundation Degree graduates may therefore be required to undertake a bridging programme to ensure they meet the academic requirements for progression to level 6 study. Any bridging programme must be specified and approved through the Foundation Degree approval process.

For further information about these regulations, please contact Student Central – Taught Programmes Team.

Approved:
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Last updated:
Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, 22 May 2013 (amendments to admissions and re-assessment arrangements)
Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, 16 September 2015 (removal of B1.9 Intermission – replaced with D3)