1. **Authority**
   
i. These regulations apply to all programmes of study leading to the award of a Foundation Degree (FdA, FdSc or FdEng), and to the level 6 programmes of study ('top-up' programmes) which enable Foundation Degree graduates to progress to study for a Bachelors Degree with Honours (BA, BSc or BEng) in the same discipline.

   
   
   ii. 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 that apply to Foundation Degrees (sections 2-5) and the associated Level 6 Top-Up programmes (section 6).

   
   
   iii. Foundation Degree and level 6 Top-Up 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 wider region. The procedures for the approval of such arrangements are set out in the University’s [Quality & Standards Handbook, chapter 5](#). Programme and Liaison Managers must ensure that individual programme regulations are set out clearly in the relevant student handbook, and that they are consistent with the requirements of the University Regulations.

2. **Characteristics of Foundation degrees**
   
i. Foundation Degrees are level 5 qualifications which are intended to integrate academic and work-based learning, through collaboration between HE providers and 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. Foundation Degrees also provide a route to Honours-level study for students who may not previously have considered entering higher education. The credit requirements, and the normal and maximum study periods, for foundation degree programmes are set out in the Core University Regulations ([section A1.1.7 ii](#)).

   
   
   ii. 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. Some Foundation Degrees may lead to professional accreditation, through the normal procedures for recognition set out by the relevant professional body.

   
   
   iii. A key reference point for the development of Foundation Degree programmes at the University is the Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement (QAA, September 2015), which is part of the UK Quality Code (Part A) and can be found at [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Foundation-Degree-Characteristics-15.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Foundation-Degree-Characteristics-15.pdf)
3. Admissions
   i. The entry requirements for individual programmes should be set out in the approved Programme Specification and in the prospectus course entry. Target groups for recruitment will vary according to the nature of the programme, but entrants to Foundation Degree programmes should – as well as holding the appropriate entry qualifications (see below) – should normally have a current role in an appropriate workplace setting, and provide a line manager’s letter of support and recommendation. The level of experience and employment status required to gain entry to the programme will be set out in the approved Programme Specification and prospectus course entry.

   ii. Academic entry qualifications normally include:
   - three passes at GCSE (grades A–C), or O-level (grades A–C), normally including Mathematics and English Language;
   - a minimum of one pass at A-level or 6-unit Vocational A-level;
   - a National Certificate or Diploma or other equivalent qualification, such as GNVQ/NVQ or other Level 3 vocational qualifications.

      Qualification equivalents
   iii. 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 level 3 qualifications listed in (ii) 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 and in the prospectus course entry.

   iv. 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
   v. 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
   vi. 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
   vii. 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;

   Admission with Credit
   viii. 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 the Core University Regulations A2.5).
4. Assessment

i. The assessment regulations and grading schemes applying to programmes of study leading to Foundation Degree awards are set out in the University Core Regulations section A3. The grading scheme applying to Foundation Degrees delivered at partner organisations, i.e. those currently outside the Grade Point Average scheme, is set out in A3.14.2 (i).

ii. The overall pass mark for all modules 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, in order 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.

Re-assessment

iii. A student who achieves between 30 and 39% on a module will be entitled to re-assessment. A student awarded one of the resit grades, resit through mitigation grades or resit through changed assessment arrangement grades will be entitled to reassessment only once per assessment task in each run of a module, and only at the specific resit period.

iv. Re-assessment implies either re-examination or the submission of further coursework for assessment or a combination of both. Where the original assessment involved both examination and coursework components, a pass mark must normally be achieved on the combination of the re-assessed component and the original mark of the other component. When a specified mark must be achieved in one or more individual assessment 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.

v. For a student taking a resit arising from grades (i.e. awarded RC, RE or RB) a maximum mark of 40% (40D) can be achieved at re-assessment. If grade FR is awarded, the marks assigned to the assessment shall be those achieved in the resit unless this is less than the original mark, in which case the original mark shall stand. When a student does not take a resit that has been offered, the resit grade shall be resolved to grade FW.

vi. A student taking a resit in recognition of mitigating circumstances (DE, DC or DB) will be awarded the higher of the marks obtained in either the original assessment or the re-assessment. When a student with an original mark of less than 40 does not take the resit that has been offered, the resit grade shall be resolved to grade FW.

vii. A student failing to achieve an overall mark of 30% in a module will be required to retake the module. 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 on the transcript. Students are permitted up to two retake attempts per module. The highest of the module marks achieved over all registrations will count towards the requirements of the award, and the lower one/s will be disregarded and will not count towards the overall award classification.

viii. The requirements of an accrediting professional body may be more stringent with respect to re-assessment than the rules set out within these regulations. The requirements both for passing the academic programme and for gaining professional accreditation must be clearly stated in the programme and module specifications and in the handbooks provided to students.

Progression within the programme

ix. The following requirements apply for progression within a Foundation Degree programme:

- in order to satisfactorily complete a year of full-time study, a student must pass at least 90 credits during the year;
• in order to satisfactorily complete 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 if they do 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.

5. Foundation Degree award classification
i. 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.

ii. The Programme Specification must indicate how the final award classification will be calculated for any 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 basis of modules studied on the Oxford Brookes programme.

Exit awards
iii. 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.

iv. 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. A Merit grade is awarded to students who achieve an average score of between 60-69% for these modules. 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.

6. Progression to Honours-level study
i. 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 choice of 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.

ii. The Foundation Degree 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.
iii. As a general rule, the additional programme of study (120 credits at level 6) required to qualify for a Bachelors Degree with Honours 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).

7. **Assessment of Honours Top-Up programmes**

i. The grades set out in regulation A3.14.2 (i) apply to the Honours Top-Up programmes covered by these regulations. The requirements set out in section 4 (i-viii) above also apply to the assessment of Honours level Top-Up programmes.

8. **Honours Degree award classification**

i. To qualify for the award of a Bachelors Degree with Honours, a student must, within 3 years of first registering, achieve 120 credits at level 6 in addition to the 240 credits (at levels 4 and 5) gained via their foundation degree qualification. An Ordinary Bachelors degree is available as an exit award for students who pass 60 credits at level 6 but are unable to complete the full Honours programme of study.

ii. The overall Honours degree classification will be decided in accordance with the table below, based on the average of the modules marks for all eight modules taken on the Top-Up programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of Honours</th>
<th>Minimum Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper second</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower second</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NB. Averages are truncated, not rounded up. In calculating a student's final average, marks for double modules are counted as two identical single marks.*

9. **Further information**

i. For further information about these regulations, please contact the Taught Programmes Team in Student Central.

**Approved:**
Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, 27 June 2012
Academic Board, 18 July 2012

**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)
- Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, 14 September 2016 (addition of specific assessment regulations applying to FD programmes and inclusion of level 6 top-up programmes)