

REGULATIONS

A1.2 The University Credit Framework

A1.2.1 Principles

- i. A learner is awarded academic credit in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a particular level.
- ii. The basic unit of credit relates to 10 hours of notional learning time.
- iii. A standard academic year for a full-time undergraduate honours degree student equates to 120 credits (1200 notional hours), and for a student on a full-time taught postgraduate programme equates to 180 credits (1800 notional hours).
- iv. Academic credit given in respect of successful fulfilment of the requirements of a module can be awarded only once and cannot be double-counted.
- v. The credits accrued as part of a programme may not be accredited towards any other award in addition, unless the total exceeds the minimum requirement for the award to which the programme leads.
- vi. The maximum credit load for students on undergraduate programmes (levels 4 to 6) is 150 credits (10 module credits) per year and 220 credits (11 module credits) per year for taught postgraduate programmes (level 7). AESC may approve variations to this standard maxima for specific programme subject to a request from a Faculty AESC. The Academic Registrar may consider requests for variations for individual students on an exceptional basis.

Key reference points:

- [UK Quality Code Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards](#)

A1.2.2 Definition of programmes of study

- i. Programmes of study are constructed to enable students to progress through the credit levels and, on achievement of the learning outcomes and credit requirements associated with each stage of the programme, to qualify for a University award. Where appropriate, programmes must be designed to allow for entry and exit at different stages, to allow maximum flexibility for students.
- ii. A stage indicates the sub-division of a programme of study into major steps of progression. Each stage provides a coherent learning experience and may be certified with an interim exit award. Normally, modules within a stage will be at the same level, but modules at different levels may be taken within the same stage, as specified in the programme or award scheme regulations.
- iii. All programmes leading to a University award or certificate of credit must have a Programme Specification, set out on the approved University template, which forms part of the University's public information set. The Programme Specification is a concise description of a programme, including the awards available, entry requirements, learning outcomes, curriculum structure, and details of how the programme will be taught and assessed. A programme specification is required for all credit bearing programmes of study, and is formally approved by the University as the

awarding body. Any modifications to a programme must be formally approved through the appropriate procedure, as set out in the University's Quality & Standards Handbook, and a revised Programme Specification will be published by the Academic Policy & Quality Office.

A1.2.3 University awards: minimum credits and levels

- i. A list of University awards, and description of each award, is available in Section A1.1 of the University Regulations. Programmes leading to a major University award must consist of at least 60 credits. Programmes of less than 60 credits are classified as short courses, and lead to the award of a University Certificate of Credit rather than a substantive qualification.
- ii. The *minimum* amount of credit required for each award is shown in the table below. The level of the final award is given in the end column. (*Where level 3 credit is permitted within undergraduate awards, or level 6 credit permitted within postgraduate awards, the maximum amounts allowable are also shown.*)

| Award* | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 | Level 8 | Total credit | |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|----------------|
| Foundation Diploma | 120 | | | | | | 120 | L3 |
| University Certificate | max.20 | 40 | | | | | 60 | L4 |
| Certificate of Higher Education | max.30 | 90 | | | | | 120 | |
| University Diploma | | max.20 | 40 | | | | 60 | L5 |
| Diploma of Higher Education | max.30 | | 90 | | | | 240 | |
| Foundation Degree | max.30 | | 90 | | | | 240 | Level 6 awards |
| Bachelors Degrees | max.30 | | | 60 | | | 300 | |
| Bachelors Degrees with Honours | max.30 | | | 90 | | | 360 | |
| Graduate Certificates | | | | 40 | | | 40 | |
| Graduate Diplomas | | | | 80 | | | 80 | |
| Diploma in Advanced Study | | | 90 | | | | 120 | |
| Advanced Diploma | max.20 | | | 40 | | | 60 | |
| Professional Graduate Certificate in Education | | | | 40 | | | 60 | |
| Postgraduate Certificate in Education | | | | | 40 | | 60 | Level 7 awards |
| Master of Biology | max.30 | | | | 120 | | 480 | |
| Master of Engineering | | | | | | | | |
| Master of Mathematics | | | | | | | | |
| Master of Osteopathy | | | | | | | | |
| Master of Planning | | | | | | | | |
| Master of Science | | | | | | | | |
| Postgraduate Certificates | | | | max.10 | 50 | | 60 | |
| Certificate in Management | | | | | | | | |
| Postgraduate Diplomas | | | | max.20 | 100 | | 120 | |
| Postgraduate Diploma in Architecture | | | | | | | | |
| Diploma in Management and Leadership | | | | | | | | |
| Postgraduate Diploma of Research | | | | | | | | |
| Master of Architecture | | | | max.30 | 150 | | 180 | |
| Master of Arts | | | | | | | | |
| Master of Business Administration | | | | | | | | |
| Master of Laws | | | | | | | | |
| Master of Planning | | | | | | | | |
| Master of Research | | | | | | | | |
| Master of Science | | | | | | | | |
| Master of Architectural Design | | | | | 240 | | 240 | |
| European Masters | | | | | | | | |
| Doctor of Education | | | | max.30 | | 360 | 480 | L8 |
| Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring | | | | | 180 | 360 | 540 | |

Notes:

*PGCE: The minimum credit volumes stated above apply to programmes of study leading to an academic award. PGCE programmes in which the professional training is integrated with the theory modules across the programme (and is therefore also assessed for academic credit) will exceed the minimum credit volumes stated.

*Research Masters degrees (MPhil, MA/MSc/LLM by Research), PhD awards, and Higher Doctorates (DLitt, DSc, DTech) are not typically credit rated. Refer to the regulations governing Research Degrees, Higher Doctorates and Masters by Research in section B.

*The Certificate in Spatial Planning consists of 60 credits at levels 4 (30 credits), 5 (15 credits) and 6 (15 credits), and is designed as a bridging programme for students entering the MSc Spatial Planning who do not hold a Bachelors degree in a Planning discipline.

*The Foundation Diploma in Art and Design is delivered under the University of the Arts London Awarding Body.

A1.2.4 Admissions

- i. The entry requirements for a programme of study are set out in the approved Programme Specification, outlining the qualifications, knowledge and skills required to gain admission to the programme, as appropriate to the level of the award. The specific entry requirements for a programme of study, including current entry grade requirements, how to apply, and how the suitability of applicants will be assessed, are set out in the online prospectus course entries.
- ii. Applicants may be awarded credit and admitted to a later stage of the programme, on the basis of an assessment of their prior learning. See regulations on Admissions and the recognition of prior learning in Section A2 of the regulations.

A1.2.5 Programme regulations

- i. Every programme of study must conform to the regulatory framework for the design, delivery and assessment governing the award scheme of which it is a part. A programme may also be subject to the requirements of a professional, statutory or regulatory body. Any variations from the University Regulations that may be required by an individual programme must be approved by the Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee (as set out in the Quality and Standards Handbook) and recorded in the programme specification and the programme handbook. Variations applying to all University programmes are recorded in section B10 of the University regulations.
- ii. Where a new programme of study does not conform to any specific award scheme regulations in section B of the University Regulations, a full set of programme regulations must be drawn up, in accordance with the Core Regulations (section A), and recorded in the programme handbook.
- iii. 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 agreed with the approved external examiner/s. Changes to the regulations applying to the programme must be formally approved by the Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee through the procedure set out in the University's Quality & Standards Handbook.

A1.2.6 Aims and learning outcomes

- i. A learning outcome is a statement of what a learner is expected to have achieved in order to be awarded the academic credit associated with a module or programme. Learning outcomes must be consistent with the expectations of the sector - as articulated in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, and by the relevant professional bodies - in respect of the academic and professional standards of the award to which the programme leads.

- ii. Programme aims must be consistent with the University's general educational aims which include the CNAA principle that programmes of study 'must stimulate an enquiring, analytical and creative approach, encouraging independent judgement and critical self-awareness'. Programme aims and objectives must also be consistent with the principles set out in the Strategy for Enhancing the Student Experience and other relevant University academic policies and strategies.
- iii. Each target award has a set of aims and learning outcomes which can be achieved through successfully studying a series of modules, which may be prescribed, or selected by the student, according to the programme or award scheme requirements. The curriculum structure and content must be consistent with the expectations of the discipline and with relevant professional bodies and industries; and with the University's principles for curriculum design as set out in the Strategy for Enhancing the Student Experience. The learning outcomes of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes must reflect the University's Graduate or Postgraduate Attributes.
- iv. The process and criteria for programme approval are articulated in the University's Quality and Standards Handbook.

A1.2.7 Award titles

- i. A title may be given to an approved programme leading to any taught award. Any title of a programme of study that is to appear on an award certificate conferred by the University must be taken from the Programme Specification which has been approved in accordance with the University's requirements, as specified in the Quality & Standards Handbook.
- ii. Programme titles must be straightforward, and accurately reflect the course content so as to provide useful information to students, potential students, employers and other stakeholders about the level of knowledge and skill to be expected from a person holding such a qualification. Programme titles must accord with the expectations of the discipline within the higher education sector, and those of relevant professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.
- iii. 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 award 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.
- iv. The titles of single-module credit-bearing short courses leading to the award of a University Certificate should be taken from the module title.

A1.2.8 Module definitions

- i. A module is a formally structured learning experience with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Students are awarded academic credit in respect of their achievement as demonstrated through meeting the learning outcomes for a module. Small amounts of measurable learning can therefore be accredited and recorded, and may be accumulated towards a qualification. Modules may be practice/work-based or theoretical, or contain elements of both.
- ii. A credit value, specified in terms of the number of credits and the level, is ascribed to each module. The level assigned to a module is an indicator of the relative complexity or depth of learning required to achieve the stated learning outcomes. Level descriptors are reference points setting out the generic characteristics of learning at specific levels, for example, as in the SEEC level descriptors (2010).
- iii. The number of credits assigned to a module is based on the estimated notional learning hours, i.e. the number of hours which it is expected that a learner (at a particular level) will spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes at that level. 1 credit equates to approximately 10 notional learning hours during which time students will take part in a range of different learning activities which will be specified in the module descriptor. For ease of transferability within the

University, the standard ('single') module size is 15 credits on undergraduate programmes and 20 credits on postgraduate programmes. For Workforce Development short course provision, smaller sized modules, in multiples of 5 credits, are permitted.

- iv. In order to be eligible for the award of academic credit for a completed module, students must submit the required pieces of work for assessment and meet the requirements of and regulations governing the module or programme of study (refer to section A3 Assessment).
- v. Modules may be designated as compulsory or optional, according to their importance in enabling students to achieve the learning outcomes for the programme as a whole and, where applicable, to meet professional body requirements. Compulsory modules serve a fundamental role within the curriculum for a programme of study, and achievement of the credits attached to these modules is essential for the conferment of award. Optional modules are offered to students in order to provide an element of choice in the curriculum, and may complement compulsory modules.
- vi. Individual modules do not have intrinsic status as compulsory or optional, as defined above, but are designated as such in relation to a specific programme of study – the same module may therefore be defined as compulsory in one programme and optional in another.
- vii. Modules may also be designated as pre- or co-requisite with other modules within a programme of study. A pre-requisite module provides specific preparation for another named module, either at the same level or at a higher level. Students are expected to take pre-requisite modules in the designated order, as given in the Programme Specification. Programme leaders should consider whether the potential restrictions with respect to progression placed on students by designating modules as mandatory pre-requisites are essential from an academic or professional perspective. Co-requisite modules must be taken together, normally in the same stage of a programme of study.
- viii. Other module classifications used within the Undergraduate Modular Programme are defined in the specific regulations governing the Undergraduate Modular Programme.
- ix. Every module must be set out on the current University module descriptor template, and approved according to the University requirements as set out in the Quality & Standards Handbook. These module details must be made available to students via PIP and/or in module handbooks.

A1.2.9 Work-based learning and professional practice

- i. 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.
- ii. 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 or practice placement for this purpose, sometimes 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.
- iii. 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.
- iv. 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.

A1.2.10 Planned duration and mode of study

- i. 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 A1.1.7, 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.
- ii. The definitions of awards given in A1.1 state the normal minimum planned length of a programme of study in terms of full-time study in academic years based on the normal level of entry. Programmes of study 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 of 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.
- iii. 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.

A1.2.11 Part-time study

- i. The duration of a part-time programme will in all cases be longer than the minimum duration 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.
- ii. 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.

A1.2.12 Sandwich degrees

- i. 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.
- ii. 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.

A1.2.13 Modern language degrees

- i. 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 A2.5.7).

- ii. Details about [student exchange and study abroad programmes](#) can be found on the University website.

A1.2.14 Progression

- i. Programmes should be designed so as to place increasing intellectual demands on students as they progress through the levels, or stages, of study. Requirements for progression from one stage to the next, including any attendance requirements, must be articulated in the Programme Specification and student handbook.
- ii. Programmes should have a clear structure consisting of compulsory or alternative pathways through the programme, with compulsory and pre-requisite modules to guide students through the levels to the appropriate award. The pathway choices available must be made clear to students in the Programme Specification and student handbook, and explained to them during induction, particularly in respect of the implications of the selection of particular modules in the early stages of the programme on their potential module options at the higher levels.
- iii. Progression regulations must set out the way/s in which students may progress through the programme, and identify the elements that are compulsory and optional. The requirements for progression to the next stage of a programme (if applicable) must be clearly stated in the programme specification and handbook, and explained to students at the start of the programme. Students must be given clear information about the effect of passing or failing a module on their eligibility to take other modules and the implications for progression or completion of the programme. Further information on progression and completion is available in the specific regulations and in the Programme Specifications.
- iv. Where the objectives of the programme are such that attendance is compulsory for specific elements, the Programme Specification and Handbook must give details of the attendance requirements to be met by students.
- v. Any elements that must be passed in order to qualify for professional accreditation must be identified in the programme specification and handbook.
- vi. The programme handbook must give details of any formal arrangements designed to monitor students' progress and warn students of possible failure.
- vii. 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.
- viii. Progression routes must be provided from Foundation Degree programmes to Honours level study.

For further information about these regulations, please contact the Academic Registrar.

Approved by:

Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, 27th June 2012

Academic Board, 18th July 2012

Updates:

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| A1.2.3 Updates to minimum credit requirements for Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and PGCE awards | Academic Enhancement & Standards Committee, 22 nd May 2013 |
| A1.2.1 Introduction of maximum credit load for students on undergraduate programmes | Academic Board, 12 th February 2014 |
| A1.2.4 Addition of reference to online prospectus course entries | Routine updating by APQO, 1 st July 2016 |
| A1.2.3 New awarding body for the Foundation Diploma in Art and Design | TDE Faculty Executive Group, 15th December 2015 Faculty of TDE Quality Sub-Group acting on behalf of Faculty AESC, 22nd August 2016 |
| A1.2.3 New award added: Master of Psychology | Academic Board, 12 July 2017 |