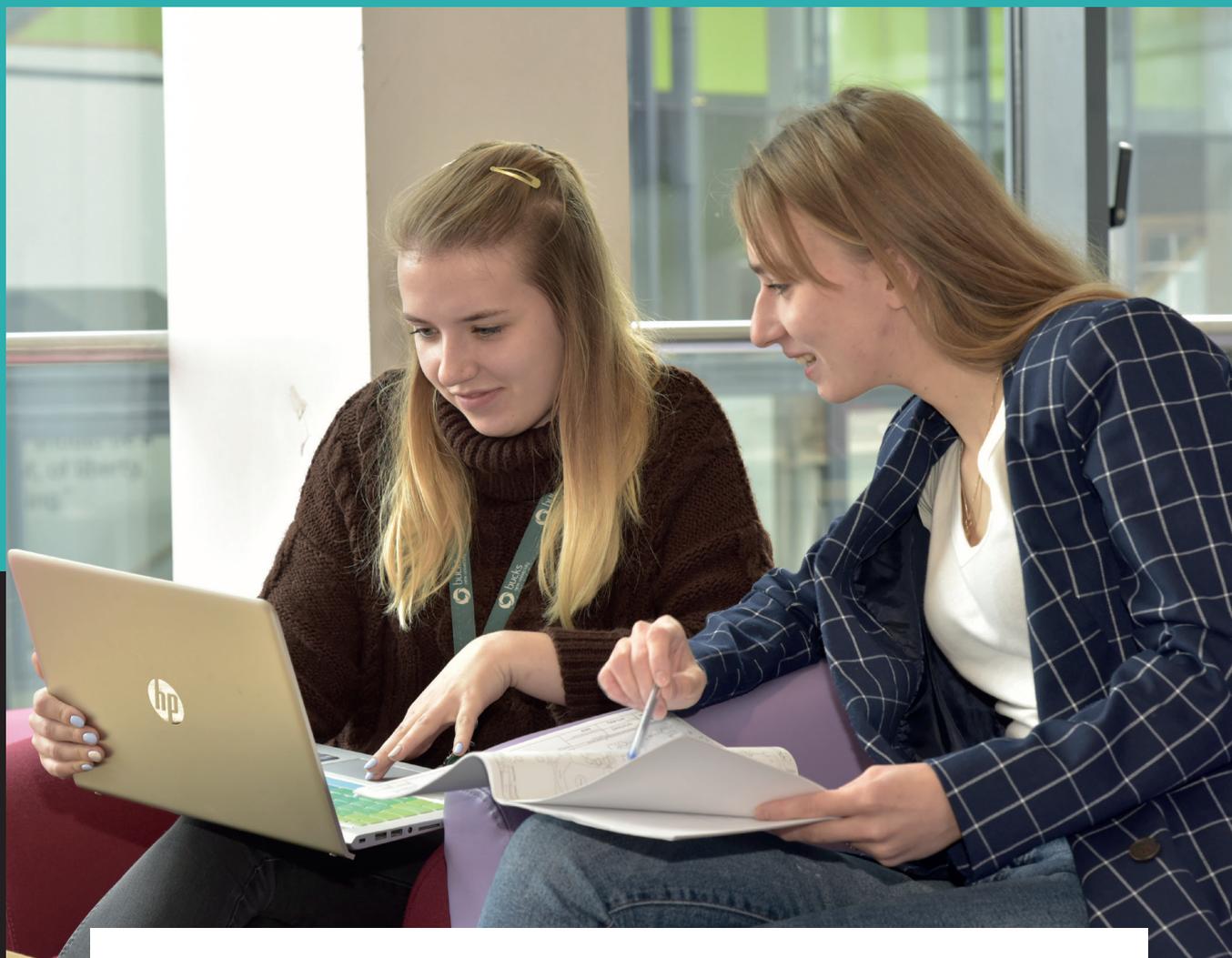




BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

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ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

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This document has been designed to be accessible for readers. However, should you require the document in an alternative format please contact the Academic Registry.

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Note: Hyperlinks have been provided for ease of reference. For other documents please see the Policies page on the main University website (<http://bucks.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-policies/policies>) or visit the Academic Advice webpages (<http://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice>)

Purpose Statement

- 1 The purpose of the *Academic Qualifications Framework* is to set out the framework for all taught academic programmes of study offered by the University.
- 2 The framework defines the parameters within which all taught academic programmes are designed. Specifically, it covers:
 - a Qualification titles offered by the University; and,
 - b The structure, level and credit requirements for each qualification.
- 3 The framework is designed to:
 - a Provide reference points against which University qualifications can be defined and benchmarked;
 - b Ensure consistency in the use of qualification titles; and,
 - c Enable a common understanding of the characteristics and achievements represented by a qualification of the University.
- 4 In implementing this framework, reference may need to be made to the following University procedures and / or regulations:
 - a *Academic Assessment Regulations*;
 - b *Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) Policy and Procedure*;
 - c *Approval of Academic Provision*;
 - d *Assessment of Students*;
 - e *Certification and Transcript Procedure*.

Applicability and Scope

- 5 This framework applies to all taught academic qualifications, including foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study validated and awarded by the University for delivery in the UK and / or overseas. It applies to all modes and regimes of delivery.¹
- 6 The only exceptions to this framework are where changes are necessary to meet professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements, normally for accreditation purposes. These requirements will be additional to and will supersede the regulations in this framework and will be detailed in Programme Specifications and agreed at validation.
- 7 This framework does not apply to honorary degrees or other honorary qualifications as these are not academic awards.

¹ This framework also covers the structure of the taught Professional Doctorate in general terms although this qualification is awarded by the University's research degree awarding body. This framework will be superseded by any requirement of the research degree awarding body.

Responsibilities

- 8 This framework is owned by the Academic Registry on behalf of the University. All queries relating to interpretation of the framework should be directed to it.

National Qualification and Credit Frameworks

- 9 The Academic Qualifications Framework is aligned to [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) which is published by the QAA.
- 10 Through alignment to the FHEQ, the Framework is also aligned to the *Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area* (FQ-EHEA), established through the Bologna Process, which provides a mechanism for relating the qualifications frameworks of different European countries to each other and promotes learner and graduate mobility across Europe.
- 11 Credit frameworks are threshold reference points for designing and approving academic programmes where credit is awarded, and bring consistency of approach to its use.
- 12 The [Higher education credit framework for England: guidance on academic credit arrangements in higher education in England](#) provides guidance on the use of credit in the design of programmes leading to the main higher education qualifications in the FHEQ. This has been used to define the University's level and credit requirements for its programmes of study.
- 13 In addition to these documents, the QAA publishes [supporting resources](#) on the characteristics of the following qualifications which may be used as additional reference points:
- a *Doctoral degree Characteristics Statement* (including the Professional Doctorate);
 - b *Master's Degree Characteristics Statement*;
 - c *Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement*;
 - d *Qualifications involving more than one degree-awarding body*.

Features of academic programmes at Bucks

- 14 All University qualifications must present a coherent programme of study which is detailed in an approved Programme Specification which is agreed at validation.
- 15 Qualifications will consist of a series of positively-defined, programme-specific learning outcomes that must be achieved before the specific award can be conferred.
- 16 Programme learning outcomes must be set at the relevant level defined in the framework for the award of a qualification set at that level.
- 17 Achievement is demonstrated through the attainment of academic credit for modules which are mapped against relevant and specific programme learning outcomes. Only core modules should be mapped to learning outcomes; optional modules may

contribute but are not always delivered and therefore may not be a requirement for achievement.

Award titles and programme naming conventions

- 18 The programme name and award title should generally reflect the following convention:
- [Level of qualification, e.g. 'Master of'] [generic field of study, e.g. 'Arts'] [name of subject area], e.g. *Master of Arts Business Management*.
- This will be abbreviated to *MA Business Management*.²
- 19 A list of approved qualifications (including their abbreviated forms) is provided at Appendix 1: Table of approved qualifications.
- 20 For bachelor honours degrees, the words 'with Honours' must appear in both the award title and in the programme name immediately after the generic field of study, e.g. *Bachelor of Arts with Honours Business Management*. This will be abbreviated to *BA (Hons) Business Management*.
- 21 The generic field of study indicator will be dictated by the principal discipline of study for the programme.
- 22 In determining the name of subject area to be used in the programme name, consideration should be given to the following:
- The extent of specialisation within the programme in terms of aims and learning outcomes
 - The extent of professional or employment demands for the specific title
 - The potential for misunderstanding or misinterpretation by students or employers
 - The long-term life expectancy of the title, especially when this is driven by current market demands
 - The perception of usage from a national and international perspective
- Note: The University no longer permits the use of brackets in its award titles. Pathways may be used for such courses although all awards will be given in the parent title.
- 23 All award titles must be approved by Senate through the University's *Approval of Academic Provision* process.

Mode and Regime of Delivery

- 24 Each award will have an associated regime of delivery which governs how the programme will be delivered. The regime of delivery will also help determine the mode of delivery (full or part-time).
- 25 The University recognises the following regimes of delivery:
- a **Attendance:** An attendance programme will be delivered to students face to face in a traditional teaching environment at one or more of the University's campuses,

² The formulation "Master in..." should be used to distinguish an Integrated master's degree (e.g. MArt, MSci) where there is a similarly titled postgraduate degree (e.g. MA, MSc). Where there is no equivalent postgraduate degree the title will be "Master of..." (e.g. MEng, MOst)

or those of its educational partners. An attendance programme can be delivered as either full or part-time.

- b **Work-based Learning (WBL):** Work-based learning programmes bring together the University and a work organisation to deliver a learning opportunity in the workplace. Students are employees first whose programme is embedded in the workplace. All work-based learning programmes are by definition considered to be part-time regardless of the number of credits delivered in a particular timescale. A degree apprenticeship is an example of a work-based learning programme.
- c **Flexible & Distributed Learning (FDL):** An FDL programme will be delivered and/or assessed through means which generally do not require a student physically to attend classes or sessions at particular times and/or locations. Such provision includes distance learning, e-learning, and blended learning programmes (which combine traditional classroom based teaching with online delivery) and may or may not involve an educational partner. An FDL programme may be full-time or part-time.

Learning outcomes

- 26 A learning outcome is a concise statement that describes what a learner will be able to do as a result of the learning undertaken.
- 27 Learning outcomes can be set at both programme (a 'programme learning outcome') and module ('module learning outcome') levels. They should be set at the minimum level of achievement (the 'threshold level').
- 28 For most programmes at the University, learning outcomes are linked to one of the University's four Graduate Attributes³:
 - a Knowledge and its application;
 - b Creativity;
 - c Social and ethical awareness and responsibility;
 - d Leadership and self-development.
- 29 For some degree apprenticeship programmes, learning outcomes will instead be driven by the Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours as defined by the relevant Apprenticeship Standard.

Academic levels

- 30 The FHEQ is part of an overall National Qualification Framework (NQF) which sets out a hierarchy of qualifications from levels 1-8.
- 31 The FHEQ itself covers higher education qualifications, i.e. qualifications from levels 4 (Certificate of Higher Education) to 8 (Doctoral degrees). These correspond to the three qualification cycles specified in the FQ-EHEA.

³ See: https://bucks.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/18185/The-Bucks-Graduate-Attributes.pdf

- 32 The table below specifies the typical higher education qualifications awarded at each level within the FHEQ:

Typical higher education qualifications awarded within each level	FHEQ level	Corresponding FQ-EHEA cycle
Doctoral degrees (e.g. PhD, EdD, DNurs etc.)	8	Third cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Master's degrees (e.g. MPhil, MRes, MA, MSc)	7	Second cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Integrated master's degrees (e.g. MEng)		
Postgraduate diplomas (PGDip)		
Postgraduate certificates (PGCert)		
Bachelor's degrees with honours (e.g. BA/BSc Hons)	6	First cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Bachelor's degrees (Ordinary degrees)		
Graduate diplomas		
Graduate certificates		
Foundation degrees (e.g. FdA, FdSc)	5	Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications
Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)		
Higher National Diplomas (HND) awarded under licence from Pearson		
Higher National Certificates (HNC) awarded under licence from Pearson	4	
Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)		

- 33 The FHEQ describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification type at each level. The University is required to ensure that for each of its qualifications the requirements of the framework have been met. This alignment will be tested through validation.
- 34 All programmes of study offered by the University must be located at the corresponding level for that qualification and aligned with the relevant descriptor in the FHEQ. Again, this will be checked and confirmed at validation.

The use of academic credit

- 35 Credit is used by the University as a means of measuring the amount of learning expected for its qualifications and their intellectual demand. The University has adopted the convention that one credit is the equivalent to ten notional hours of learning.
- 36 The University has defined the credit values of each of its qualifications. These are provided under the relevant part of the Academic Framework below (see pages 10 following). All taught programmes of study must be structured using these credit values.

- 37 The University expects that a full-time undergraduate programme will comprise 120 credits per year, which is the equivalent of 1,200 notional learning hours. A typical undergraduate programme is divided into 2 semesters of approximately 60 credits of learning.
- 38 A full-time postgraduate programme will instead comprise 180 credits per year, which is the equivalent of 1,800 notional learning hours, and which will be delivered across twelve months. A typical postgraduate programme is divided into 2 semesters with the addition of a third, summer period. Each study period will comprise approximately 60 credits of learning.
- 39 Other structures are possible, but course teams will need to demonstrate how the volume of learning may be divided across the timescale indicated. This will be tested at validation.
- 40 A variety of course structure modules are available at Appendix 2: Course Structure Models.

Modules

- 41 A module is a discrete unit of learning set at a specified level which leads to the award of academic credit and / or which contributes to a programme or qualification.
- 42 A module descriptor will define:
- The overall aims or objectives of the module;
 - The level at which the unit is to be delivered;
 - The learning outcomes to be demonstrated and the method of delivery;
 - The volume of credit to be achieved, representing a notional volume of study; and,
 - The means of assessment by which learning outcomes will be achieved, demonstrated and credit awarded.
- 43 A module will normally be delivered as part of a broader programme; it is expected that achievement of the module will contribute to achievement of an overarching programme learning outcome(s). Mapping of modules to programme learning outcomes will be undertaken as part of validation.
- 44 The University has specified module credit sizes for its qualifications. Programmes of study should typically be constituted as comprising either 15 or 30 credit modules. Master's dissertation modules will normally comprise 60 credits of learning. Exceptions to this structure must be evidenced and agreed at validation along with any supporting assessment regulations required.
- 45 Modules should be delivered as semester-long in accordance with the normal pattern of attendance. This makes allowance for mid-year intakes. Other delivery modules, e.g. weekend delivery should be specified and agreed at validation.

Intermediate and exit qualifications

- 46 Intermediate and exit qualifications are separate qualifications which can be awarded at a specific stage or level part of the way through a longer programme of study.
- a An intermediate qualification **can be registered for** at the outset of study, e.g. a student can choose only to study for a PGDip on certain Master's courses;

- b An exit qualification is a qualification awarded for which the student **has not registered for** at the outset of study, e.g. a CertHE awarded to a student who has withdrawn from their degree programme.
- 47 Both intermediate and exit qualifications will have specific programme learning outcomes defined in the Programme Specification for the relevant level of the qualification. All programme learning outcomes must be achieved before a qualification can be conferred.
- 48 Intermediate qualifications will be specified as entry routes in a programme specification and will be allocated a course code on the University's student records system.
- 49 Exit qualifications will not be specified as entry routes and will not have a separate course code but such qualifications will be defined in the relevant programme specification as named exit awards that can be conferred for that named programme.
- 50 The University recognises the following exit qualifications for its **undergraduate** programmes:
- A **Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)** for a student who has completed the specified programme learning outcomes and achieved 120 credits at Level 4;
 - A **Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)** for a student who has completed the specified programme learning outcomes and achieved a combined total of 240 credits comprising 120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5;
 - An **Ordinary degree** for a student who has completed the specified programme learning outcomes and achieved a combined total of 300 credits comprising 120 credits at Level 4, 120 credits at Level 5, and 60 credits at Level 6.
 - An **Honours degree** (i.e. with classification) for a student who has completed the specified programme learning outcomes and achieved a combined total of 360 credits comprising 120 credits at Level 4, 120 credits at Level 5, and 120 credits at Level 6. Note: This will only apply to students studying for an Integrated master's degree.
- 51 The University recognises the following exit qualifications for its **postgraduate** programmes:
- A **Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)** for a student who has completed the specified programme learning outcomes and achieved 60 credits at Level 7;
 - A **Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)** for a student who has completed the specified programme learning outcomes and achieved 120 credits at Level 7.
- 52 Intermediate and exit qualifications **must not** use credits from a higher level to make up for any credit deficit at a lower level as credits are mapped against achievement of specific programme learning outcomes. Students who are not eligible for an intermediate or exit qualification will be awarded credits only. This is further detailed in the University's *Academic Assessment Regulations*.
- 53 Unless detailed in the Programme Specification and approved at validation, intermediate and exit qualifications will be given in the title of the parent qualification.

Study Abroad, Work Experience or Placement opportunities

- 54 A period of study abroad, work experience or placement may be offered as part of a programme. This will either be:
- In addition to the normal minimum period of registration for a programme; or,
 - Integral to the programme with activities specified as modules with measurable learning outcomes, assessed activities and assigned credit point values.
- 55 The University subscribes to the Erasmus+ European exchange programme. This allows selected students to study the equivalent of 60 or 120 credits with a European or overseas partner higher education institution and to be assessed by the local University.
- 56 Where student achievement during study abroad and / or placement is taken into account in determining eligibility for qualification and classification (including intermediate and exit qualifications) the following must be specified:
- a How the opportunity contributes towards the achievement of programme learning outcomes; and,
 - b How the standard criteria for the calculation of the overall weighted average for a qualification should be calculated.
- 57 Arrangements for such opportunities will be approved via a comprehensive mapping exercise in accordance with the University's APL process.

Academic Qualifications Framework

Foundation year programmes

- 58 A Foundation 'Level 0' is a pre-Level 4 year to prepare students for study. It has no award of its own but may be validated as an integral part of a four-year course leading to the award of a bachelor's degree with honours, or separately as a stand-alone programme.

Note: Except for programmes where there may be specific PSRB regulations, a Foundation Year will be approved for all undergraduate degree programmes.

- 59 Each Foundation Programme module will be assigned an indicative credit value to a total of 120 credits with 1 credit being equivalent to 10 notional learning hours (i.e. 1200 notional learning hours in total). Credits will **not** be set at an academic level of achievement but will instead be identified as 'Level 0'.
- 60 A typical Foundation year programme will consist of four modules representing the equivalent of 300 notional learning hours each. Modules will be semesterised to permit mid-year intakes.

Integrated programmes

- 61 An integrated foundation year must represent a coherent part of the programme (or programmes) to which it is linked. Accordingly, each integrated foundation year must have a *subject-specific* component in addition to skills components.

- 62 Successful achievement of the integrated foundation year will enable automatic progression to Level 4 (i.e. Year 1 of a standard full-time undergraduate degree programme or its equivalent).
- 63 Integrated foundation years will be governed by the University's *Academic Assessment Regulations*.

Stand-alone programmes

- 64 Schools may validate a stand-alone Foundation Programme to prepare students for study at the University. The programme may combine specific academic study, English language and study skills. The International Foundation Year is an example of a stand-alone Foundation Programme.
- 65 Successful achievement of a stand-alone Foundation Programme will result in a Certificate of Achievement. Programme Specifications may permit entry to study specific awards on successful completion of the Foundation Programme where this is a stand-alone programme.
- 66 Regulations regarding the maximum registration, suspension, the use of referral and compensation⁴, and any other specific requirements must be written into the Programme Specification.

Undergraduate programmes

- 67 All undergraduate programmes are required to be structured as follows:

Qualification	FHEQ level	Nominal study period ⁵	Total credits	7	6	5	4	0 (Hrs)
Integrated master's degree with honours	7	4 years (45 months)	480	120	120	120	120	
Bachelor's degree with honours (with optional integrated Foundation Year)	6	3 or 4 years (33 or 45 months) ⁶	360		120	120	120	1200

⁴ 'Referral' and 'compensation' are defined in the *Academic Assessment Regulations* document.

⁵ The nominal study period is based on the length of the academic session as being 9 months long with an additional 3 months between Levels, i.e. summer vacation. This does not include any additional referral periods beyond the end of the stated end of the programme, e.g. the summer period beyond the end of a bachelor's degree programme.

⁶ A Bachelor's degree may also be offered in an 'accelerated' format, typically across two full 12 month study periods containing 180 credits drawn from Levels 4-5 and 5-6 respectively. This will be accommodated via an additional 'third' semester during the standard summer vacation between Levels. The academic requirements for the programme will remain the same but resourcing issues, including eligibility for student funding and student fees limitations will need to be carefully considered at the business case stage. Consideration should also be given to the availability of reassessment opportunities and the expected student profile.

Qualification	FHEQ level	Nominal study period ⁵	Total credits	7	6	5	4	0 (Hrs)
Bachelor's degree without honours (Ordinary degree)	6	3 years (33 months)	300		60	120	120	
Graduate diploma	6	1 year (9 months)	120		120			
Graduate certificate	6	4.5 months	60		60			
Foundation degree Diploma of Higher Education Higher National Diploma	5	2 years (21 months)	240			120	120	
Higher National Certificate	4	15 months	150			30	120	
Certificate of Higher Education	4	1 year (9 months)	120				120	

- 68 Bachelor's degrees with honours **must** contain a dissertation / project or similar piece of work at Level 6 as one method of demonstrating independent learning.

Optional modules

- 69 Qualifications may contain all core modules should this be deemed necessary by the course team.
- 70 Where optional modules are proposed, the following restrictions will apply:
- No optional modules are permissible at Level 4;
 - Up to 30 credits may be designated as optional at Level 5, with modules selected from an approved list;
 - Up to 60 credits may be designated as optional at Level 6 (and Level 7 for an Integrated master's degree), with modules selected from an approved list;
 - Optional modules **must not** be mapped against programme learning outcomes.
- 71 Where optional modules are available, curriculum development teams should be mindful of the viability thresholds in relation to the number of optional modules from which students may choose. Optional modules will only run where it is viable to do so; this should be made clear in all student and applicant-facing materials.

Postgraduate taught programmes

72 All postgraduate taught programmes are required to be structured as follows:

Qualification	FHEQ level	Nominal study period	Total credits	8	7
Professional doctorates	8	4 years (48 months)	540	390	150
Master's degrees	7	1 year (12 months)	180		180
Postgraduate diplomas	7	9 months	120		120
Postgraduate certificates	7	4.5 months	60		60

73 Master's degrees **must** contain a dissertation / project or similar piece of work at Level 7 as one method of demonstrating independent learning. The project should normally comprise 60 credits and will represent the culmination of the programme of study.

74 The structure and regulations for Professional doctoral programmes are specified in the *Professional Doctorates: Framework and Regulations* document. Professional Doctorates are awarded under Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP) of the University's validating body.

Professional and short course programmes

75 A Short Course, occasionally referred to as a Professional Course or a Professional Short Course, is a type of **short learning programme** through which a learner may or may not be awarded academic credit, but which does not lead to a nationally recognised HE award as defined within the FHEQ. For details of the distinction between credit and non-credit-bearing short courses please see: *Short Course Approval Process*.

76 Short courses will be validated each on its own module basis, with 1 credit = 10 hours of learning. Where required, short courses could include more than one module, but the course title will be derived solely from the subject area e.g. "Project management".

77 A University-wide Certificate template will be used for non-credit bearing and credit bearing short courses, and will include the phrase "Professional & Short Course Programmes".

Appendix 1: Table of current approved qualifications

Abbreviation	Full name of qualification
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BSc	Bachelor of Science
Cert	Certificate
CertHE	Certificate of Higher Education
Dip	Diploma
DipHE	Diploma of Higher Education
DMS	Diploma in Management Studies
DNurs	Doctor of Nursing ⁷
DSW	Doctor of Social Work ⁸
EdD	Doctor of Education ⁹
FDA	Foundation Degree Arts
FDS	Foundation Degree Science
GradCert	Graduate Certificate
GradDip	Graduate Diploma
HNC	Higher National Certificate ¹⁰
HND	Higher National Diploma ¹¹
LLB	Bachelor of Laws
LLM	Master of Laws
MA	Master of Arts
MArt¹²	Master in Arts
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MCM	Master of Communications Management
MEng	Master of Engineering
MOst¹³	Master of Osteopathy
MPhil¹⁴	Master of Philosophy
MSc	Master of Science
MSci¹⁵	Master in Science

⁷ Awarded by Coventry University

⁸ Awarded by Coventry University

⁹ Awarded by Coventry University

¹⁰ Awarded under licence from Pearson

¹¹ Awarded under licence from Pearson

¹² Integrated master's degree

¹³ Integrated master's degree

¹⁴ Use of the title MPhil is restricted to research degrees and is awarded by the University's validating partner for Research Degrees (currently University of Staffordshire)

¹⁵ Integrated master's degree

Abbreviation	Full name of qualification
PGCert	Postgraduate Certificate
PGDip	Postgraduate Diploma
PhD / DPhil¹⁶	Doctor of Philosophy

¹⁶ Use of the titles PhD and DPhil is restricted to research degrees and is awarded by the University's validating partner for Research Degrees (currently University of Staffordshire)

Appendix 2: Course Structure Models

Note: Teams should use semester-long modules to enable efficiency of delivery, facilitate sharing of modules between programmes and cater for multiple programme intakes within an academic year.

Table 1: Typical Undergraduate Full-Time Framework

Semester 1	Semester 2
60 Credits in combination of 15 and/or 30 credit modules, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2x 30 credit modules • 4x 15 credit modules • 1x 30 and 2x 15 credit modules 	60 Credits in combination of 15 and/or 30 credit modules, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2x 30 credit modules • 4x 15 credit modules • 1x 30 and 2x 15 credit modules

Table 2: Accelerated Undergraduate Framework

Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3 (Summer)
60 Credits in combination of 15 and/or 30 credit modules	60 Credits in combination of 15 and/or 30 credit modules	60 Credits in combination of 15 and/or 30 credit modules

Table 3: Typical Postgraduate Full-Time Framework

Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3 (Summer)
60 Credits (typically 2x 30 credit modules)	60 Credits (typically 2x 30 credit modules)	60 Credits 1x 60 credit Dissertation / Project module

Appendix 3: Higher and Degree Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is defined as a genuine job with an accompanying skills development programme / qualification as specified on the published Apprenticeship standard.

The University has published a *Curriculum Guide and Framework for Programme Development* to support the development of apprenticeship programmes and has agreed framework modules to be incorporated in programmes alongside subject-specific content.

All degree apprenticeships are defined as work-based learning programmes and the mode of delivery will therefore be part-time.

- A 'higher apprenticeship' refers to all apprenticeships that include the achievement of academic / vocational qualifications from Level 4 (CertHE) up to bachelor's and master's degrees at Levels 6-7
- A 'degree apprenticeship' is the latest model to be developed as part of higher apprenticeship standards whereby an apprentice can achieve a full bachelor's or master's degree (Levels 6 and 7) as a core component of the apprenticeship

Higher and degree apprenticeships must last a minimum of one-year; degree apprenticeships will typically last up to four years in duration.

Although an apprenticeship will specify a related qualification to be achieved, that qualification is independent of the apprenticeship itself. As such it is possible for the same qualification to be delivered as part of an apprenticeship and in its own right. However, the student undertaking the qualification separately must meet the requirements of the stand-alone programme, i.e. they must be in employment and be facilitated by their employer to undertake the programme and support their studies (as with all work-based learning programmes). For ease of reference where programme documentation refers to an apprentice this will include all students enrolled on the programme regardless of whether or not they are also registered for an apprenticeship.

Appendix 4: Explanation of terms and abbreviations

The following table provides an explanation of some of the terms and abbreviations used throughout this document.

Abbreviation or Term	Definition
CAP	Course Amendment Panel
Credit	Credit is awarded to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level
Credit accumulation	A process of achieving credits over time in relation to a planned programme of study.
Credit level	An indicator of the relative complexity, demand and / or depth of learning and of learner autonomy
Credit value	The number of credits, at a particular level, assigned to a body of learning. The number of credits is based on the estimated notional learning hours (where one credit represents 10 notional hours of learning)
Cycles	Sequential levels identified by the Bologna process within which all European higher education qualifications are located
Degree-awarding body	A UK higher education provider with the power to award degrees
Exit qualification	A qualification which may be awarded on completion of an intermediate point of studies in a longer programme of study (when a student leaves the programme) but for which the student has not registered at the outset
FHEQ	<i>The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland</i>
FQ-EHEA	<i>A Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area</i>
FTE	Full time equivalent. The number of credits studied in one year expressed as a decimal, e.g. 120 undergraduate credits in one year is the equivalent of 1 FTE
Intermediate qualification	A separate qualification which can be awarded at a specific stage or level part of the way through a longer programme of study and for which a student can register at the outset of study
Learning outcome	A learning outcome is a concise statement of an educational objective that describes what a learner will be able to do as a result of the learning undertaken
Level	One of a series of sequential stages against which qualifications can be positioned
Level descriptor	A statement of the generic characteristics of outcomes of learning at a specific level of a qualifications framework, used as a reference point.
Module	A module is a discrete unit of learning at a specified level leading to the award of credit and / or which contributes to a qualification

Abbreviation or Term	Definition
Module descriptor	A module descriptor outlines the intended learning outcomes for a module and the teaching and assessment strategy to show that learning outcomes have been achieved.
Notional Learning Hours	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.
Programme (of study)	An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience.
Programme Specification	A concise description of the intended learning outcomes from a programme of study, and how these outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated
PSRB	Professional, statutory and regulatory body: An organisation authorised to accredit, approve or recognise specific programmes in the context of the requirements of that PSRB
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
Qualification	A degree, diploma or certificate awarded by a competent authority, e.g. a degree-awarding body, in recognition that specified programme learning outcomes have been achieved following the successful completion of a recognised programme of study
Qualification descriptors	Generic statements of the outcomes of study for the main qualification at each level which exemplify the nature and characteristics of that qualification.
Stage	A period of study on a programme; typically one of several such periods.
Threshold level	The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award.
UK Quality Code	<i>The UK Quality Code for Higher Education</i> sets out the Expectations that all UK higher education providers are required to meet. It is the nationally-agreed, definitive point of reference for all those involved in delivering higher education programmes which lead to an award from, or are validated by, a UK degree-awarding body.
Validation	Validation is the process by which the University judges that a programme is of an appropriate quality and standard to lead to its award being approved.