

**BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY**

**Document Administration**

<b>Document Title:</b>	University Awards and Credit Framework
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<b>Reason for development:</b>	The University Awards and Credit Framework is aligned to the Quality Assurance Agency <i>Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies</i> , encompassing <i>The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ, 2014)</i> , and the <i>Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Guidance on Academic Credit Arrangements in Higher Education in England (QAA UK Quality Code 2008: A1)</i> .
<b>Scope:</b>	<p>Students receive academic credit in respect of their learning achievements as expressed in terms of learning outcomes. A credit value is attributed to each module of study and is specified in terms of the number of credits and the level.</p> <p>Academic credit given in respect of successful fulfilment of the requirements of a module can be awarded only once and cannot be double-counted.</p> <p>Each programme of study at the University has set aims and outcomes that provide an overall focus for its constituent modules. All taught programmes leading to a University award conform to the <i>QAA Framework and Guidance on Academic Credit Arrangements</i>.</p>
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## 1 The Credit Framework

- 1.1. The basic unit of credit relates to 10 hours of notional learning time, e.g. a 10 credit module represents 100 hours notional learning time.
- 1.2. A standard academic year for a full-time undergraduate student equates to 120 credits (1200 notional hours) and for a full-time taught masters degree student equates to a maximum of 180 credits (1800 notional hours).
- 1.3. The relationship between UK Credit Accumulation Transfer Scheme (CATS) credits and the European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (ECTS) is 1 ECTS to 2 CATs, e.g. 5 ECTS credits is equivalent to 10 CATS.

## 2. Modules

- 2.1. Each module will specify a level that indicates the intellectual demand and rigour of academic study required to successfully complete the module at each stage of study. The level correlates with the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and the National Qualification Framework (NQF).
- 2.2. The FHEQ guidance in relation to credit level descriptors held at Appendix 1 may be used as a template against which modules and their defined learning outcomes can be considered.

## 3. Programmes

- 3.1 The University will make every effort to ensure that the published programme (course) details are complete and up-to-date. However, the University will be entitled to make reasonable changes to the course (including to the content and syllabus of the course, or the location of the course or the method of delivery or assessment of the course) where that will enable the University to deliver a better quality of educational experience to students enrolled on the course. In making such changes, the University will aim to keep the changes to the minimum necessary to achieve the required quality of experience and will notify and consult with affected students as appropriate.
- 3.2 In the exceptional situation of a programme being closed, students will be notified in a timely manner and appropriate support provided for them successfully to complete their studies. Monitoring of students' progress will be the responsibility of the Portfolio Management Group (PMG); where the PMG has identified at risk students, additional support, monitoring and review will be put in place.
- 3.3 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 study, to qualify for a University award. The relationship between credits, levels and the award are illustrated in **Table 1**.
- 3.4 **Minor awards** enhance the portfolio of awards and may provide realistic initial objectives for those beginning or returning to study in higher education. Minor awards may be taken as target awards or as stepping stones to intermediate or major awards. Minor awards are not however intermediary stages of major awards; therefore a student who fails to satisfy the requirements of an intermediate or major award cannot be recommended for a minor award, even though there may be an exit award for the course for which a student may be recommended; please refer to the Programme Specification for the particular award.



Nonetheless a student who successfully completes a minor award may subsequently register for another BGU award and use the credits towards the credit requirements for that award if they are deemed appropriate either through credit transfer or APL procedures.

**Table 1:**

Award		Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
POST GRADUATE	Doctor of Philosophy						Typically not credit rated
	Doctor of Education					60	480~
	Taught Masters Degree				30 <sup>†</sup>	180 <sup>†</sup> 150	
	Postgraduate Diploma					120	
	Postgraduate Certificate (including Postgraduate Certificate in Education)					60	
	Graduate certificate (including the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education)				60* 30*	30*	
UNDER GRADUATE	Bachelors Degree with Honours		120	120	120		
	Bachelors Degree Ordinary		120	120	60		
	Foundation Degree		120	120			
	Diploma of Higher Education		120	120			
	Certificate of Higher Education		120				
Minor Awards	Advanced Certificate				60		
	Intermediate Certificate			60			
	Introductory Certificate		60				
	Credit Achievement Award	Minimum of 20 credits at any level					

†

\*The Professional Graduate Certificate in Education may comprise 30 credits at level 6 and 30 credits at level 7 or 60 credits at level 6 only.

~Students registered on the 2009 validated EdD programme undertook five level 8 modules and a thesis at level 8 = 540 credits. All future students will follow the 2015 validated programme; they will undertake two modules at level 7 (60 credits); three modules at level 8 (120 credits) and a thesis at level 8 (360 credits).

- 3.5. **Foundation degree** programmes are designed to progress from level 4 to level 5 accruing 120 credits at each level to a minimum of 240 credits and must comprise a major work-based element. Foundation degree programmes are discrete awards that on completion may permit entry into level 6 of a Bachelor degree programme or a level 6 top up Bachelor degree. A Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) may be awarded on achievement of the appropriate credit requirements.
- 3.6. **Bachelors Degree with Honours** programmes are designed to progress from level 4 to level 6 accruing 120 credits at each level to a minimum total of 360 credits. Intermediate awards may, at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, be given at either of the two step off points i.e. completion of level 4 (CertHE, 120 credits at level 4) or completion of level 4 and 5 (Diploma of Higher Education – DipHE, 120 credits at level 4 and 120 credits at level 5).



- 3.7. **Bachelors Degree (Ordinary)** programmes are not a standard offer and are only conferred in cases where a student has failed to achieve a minimum of 360 credits required for a Bachelor degree with honours but has achieved a minimum of 300 credits overall, with at least 60 credits achieved at level 6.
- 3.8. **Joint, Major/Minor honours** programmes: all joint, major/minor honours programmes should conform to the general credit requirements for undergraduate study. The normal minimum amount of credit required for each named subject in a type of pathway is illustrated in **Tables 2a and 2b** below.

**Table 2a – Joint honours programmes.**

Level	Subject A Credits	Subject B Credits	Minimum Total Credits Required
Level 4	60	60	120
Level 5	60	60	120
Level 6	60	60	120

**Table 2b – Major/minor honours programmes.**

Level	Major Subject Credits	Minor Subject Credits	Minimum Total Credits Required
Level 4	60	60	120
Level 5	80	40	120
Level 6	80	40	120

- 3.9. Level 4 module credits for either joint or major/minor honours programmes are generally evenly distributed. The title of the final award is determined by the balance of credit achieved at levels 5 and 6. In order to obtain a joint degree, programmes will be validated to ensure that a minimum of 45% of credits is assigned to either subject in levels 5 and 6.
- 3.10. **Masters degree** programmes are designed to provide 180 credits (a minimum of 150 shall be at level 7 and a maximum of 30 credits may be at level 6). Three postgraduate stages are recognised; Post Graduate Certificate (PG Cert, 60 credits); Post Graduate Diploma (PG Dip 120 credits) and finally the award of Masters degree with a minimum of 180 credits.
- 3.11. The **Doctorate in Education** programme is designed to provide a total of 540 (450 credits at level 8). The programme conforms to the regulations and requirements of the University of Leicester which is the awarding body for this validated programme (<http://www2.le.ac.uk/>).

## APPENDIX 1

**FHEQ Level Descriptors** (abbreviated for BGU; see [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/qualifications may be used as a template against which modules and their defined learning outcomes can be considered.](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/qualifications%20may%20be%20used%20as%20a%20template%20against%20which%20modules%20and%20their%20defined%20learning%20outcomes%20can%20be%20considered))

### LEVEL 4

#### **Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 4 on the FHEQ: Certificate of Higher Education**

The descriptor provided for this level is for any Certificate of Higher Education, which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications aligned with level 4 of the FHEQ.

Certificates of Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study
- an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work
- communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments
- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility

Holders of a Certificate of Higher Education will have a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject, and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems. They will be able to communicate accurately and will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility. The Certificate of Higher Education may be a first step towards obtaining higher level qualifications

### LEVEL 5

#### **Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 5 on the FHEQ: Foundation Degree**

The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any foundation degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at level 5 of the FHEQ, including Diplomas of Higher Education, Higher National Diplomas, etc.

Foundation Degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed
- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context

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- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis
- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively
- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

The Foundation Degree is an example of a qualification that meets, in full, the expectations of the qualification descriptor (and the Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark; see [www.gaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Foundation-degree-qualification-benchmark](http://www.gaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Foundation-degree-qualification-benchmark)).

Holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study, and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, for example HNDs, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field. Holders of qualifications at this level will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

### LEVEL 6

#### **Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6 on the FHEQ: Bachelor's Degree with Honours**

The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any bachelor's degree with honours which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at level 6 of the FHEQ, including bachelor's degrees, and graduate diplomas.

Bachelor's Degrees with Honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline
- an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline
  - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline
- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge



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- the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem
- communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

And holders will have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:

- the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
- decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts
- the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

Holders of a Bachelor's Degree with honours will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, the holder will have developed analytical techniques and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many types of employment. The holder of such a qualification will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements and to communicate them effectively. Holders of a Bachelor's Degree with honours should have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.

Bachelor's Degrees with Honours form the largest group of higher education qualifications. Typically, learning outcomes for these programmes would be expected to be achieved on the basis of study equivalent to three or four full-time academic years and lead to qualifications with titles such as Bachelor of Arts, BA (Hons) or Bachelor of Science, BSc (Hons). In addition to Bachelor's degrees at this level are short courses and professional 'conversion' courses, based largely on undergraduate material, and taken usually by those who are already graduates in another discipline, leading to, for example, graduate certificates or graduate diplomas.

### LEVEL 7

#### **Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7 on the FHEQ: Masters Degree**

The descriptor provided for this level of the frameworks is for any Master's degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at level 7/ SCQF level 11 on the FQHEIS, including postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas.

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline

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- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
  - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
  - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Much of the study undertaken for master's degrees is at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Successful students show originality in the application of knowledge, and they understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They are able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they show originality in tackling and solving problems. They have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

Master's degrees are awarded after completion of taught courses, programmes of research or a mixture of both. Longer, research-based programmes may lead to the degree of MPhil. The learning outcomes of most master's degree courses are achieved on the basis of study equivalent to at least one full-time calendar year and are taken by graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours (or equivalent achievement)

### LEVEL 8

#### **Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8 on the FHEQ: Doctoral Degree**

The descriptor provided for this level of the frameworks is for any Doctoral degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other level 8 qualifications.

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

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Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Doctoral degrees are awarded for the creation and interpretation, construction and/or exposition of knowledge which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research. Holders of Doctoral degrees are able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding. Holders of doctoral degrees have the qualities needed for employment that require both the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields and an innovative approach to tackling and solving problems.

Doctoral programmes that may have a substantial taught element in addition to the research component (for example, professional doctorates), lead usually to awards which include the name of the discipline in their title (for example, EdD for Doctor of Education or DClInPsy for Doctor of Clinical Psychology). Professional Doctorates aim to develop an individual's professional practice and to support them in producing a contribution to (professional) knowledge. The titles PhD and DPhil are commonly used for Doctoral degrees awarded on the basis of original research.

Achievement of outcomes consistent with the qualification descriptor for the doctoral degree normally requires study equivalent to three full-time calendar years.