



HE Academic Regulations

2024

Section A:

The Academic Regulations



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A1 The scope of the Academic Regulations

- A1.1 These Academic Regulations apply to NCG hereinafter referred to as ‘the Institution’.
- A1.2 Reference made to ‘the College’ in any Section of the HE Academic Regulations means NCG and the colleges within the Group.
- A1.3 The institution HE Academic Regulations provide:
- The framework within which programmes are designed, validated and approved.
 - The means whereby the standard of the institution awards is assured, through the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- A1.4 The institution is empowered to approve study programmes leading up to and including Masters Degrees. It may grant such awards to persons who complete the appropriate programmes and satisfy the required assessment criteria.

A2 Principles

A2.1 General

- A2.1.1 The HE Academic Regulations are determined by the HE Academic Board. They indicate how the institution fulfils its responsibilities under the Articles of Government in exercising its degree awarding powers as determined by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 Section 76, the FE Bill 2007 and other relevant legislation, and can be amended only by a resolution of the HE Academic Board.
- A2.1.2 These regulations are reviewed periodically at five yearly intervals with appropriate staff, student and External Examiner involvement or whenever anomalies arise from interpretation of Examination Boards or Committees, external examiners, staff or students. The regulations are also reviewed at any time when changes to legislation makes any regulations obsolete or non-compliant. The assessment elements are reviewed annually for the purpose of editorial and minor change, informed by student feedback.



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- A2.1.3 Any approved changes to these regulations will not be applied retrospectively to students who have graduated. No change will be implemented to the disadvantage of students currently registered for awards.

A2.2 Power of HE Academic Board

- A2.2.1 The HE Academic Board is responsible for approving the Academic Regulations, for the detailed operation, monitoring and review of these Regulations and the approval of related procedures.
- A2.2.2 The HE Academic Board will take any reasonable action it considers necessary to protect the quality of programmes and the standard of its awards.
- A2.2.3 In fulfilling its responsibilities, the HE Academic Board authorises Committees, Boards and Panels to act on its behalf. These Committees, Boards and Panels are responsible to the HE Academic Board of the institution and are required to act in accordance with the Articles of the Institution and these Academic Regulations.

A2.3 Academic Standards

- A2.3.1 The HE Academic Board ensures that all standards, clarification and grading are consistent and comparable with awards granted and conferred throughout the higher education awards.
- A2.3.2 All the institution's awards are consistent with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) 2014.
- A2.3.3 Awards are defined by a series of benchmarks relating to the general level of knowledge and skills required to register for the award, and the qualification, credit volume and study levels required to achieve the awards. Qualification level descriptors are aligned to the FHEQ.

A2.4 Quality of Learning Experience

- A2.4.1 The quality of the learning experience must be maintained and where possible enhanced. The institution will work towards enriching, informing and supporting the content, delivery, culture and criteria for the design, delivery and assessment of all its programmes



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in order to ensure equality of opportunity throughout students' academic careers.

- A2.4.2 Teaching throughout learning and assessment strategies should be appropriate to the aims and objectives of the programme and to the nature of the student population.
- A2.4.3 The design and implementation of learning and teaching strategies and activities must recognise the entitlement of students with disabilities to participate in all activities as provided by their student programme.
- A2.4.4 The teaching staff must be suitably qualified and experienced, and their teaching must be invigorated and informed by their active participation in scholarly activity, including research and/or relevant professional development.
- A2.4.5 The curriculum area delivering an approved award of the institution must be able to provide the student with appropriate academic supervision and learning support.
- A2.4.6 Students should be provided with opportunities to negotiate and take responsibility for their own learning and contribute in an informed way to programme development and quality assurance, in an atmosphere in which rational debate is encouraged.
- A2.4.7 Students' feedback on the nature of their educational experience should be sought and acted upon.

A2.5 Awards

- A2.5.1 These regulations apply in their entirety to all taught HE awards of the institution. Variations are only permitted where it is necessary to comply with the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB) and these must be approved as part of programme validation. Details of all awards and their definitions can be found in Section A3.

A2.6 Credit Accumulation and Transfer Framework

- A2.6.1 The institution operates a Credit Accumulation and Transfer Framework that governs all taught awards offered by the institution and is designed to facilitate transfer between full-time and part-time modes of student, and particular combinations of programmes to



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include institutional transfer of credit. Details of all awards and their definitions can be found in Section A3.2.

A2.7 Opportunities for Study

A2.7.1 Programmes leading to awards of the institution should be specified and structured in such a way as to enable all those with potential to benefit from and succeed in higher education to seek to gain admission and to gain the highest award of which they are capable.

A2.7.2 The institution must provide programmes which are flexible in terms of entry and exit points and mode of study.

A2.8 Admission of Students

A2.8.1 The admission of students will be based on a reasonable expectation that they will be able to:

- Benefit from their programme.
- Fulfil its aims.
- Achieve the standard required for the award for which they are registered.

A2.9 Assessment of Students

A2.9.1 The purpose of assessment is to enable students to learn, to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the aims of the programme and have achieved the standard required for the award.

A2.9.2 Academic assessment and practices must ensure that students with disabilities are given a suitable opportunity to demonstrate the achievement of competence standards and learning outcomes.

A2.9.3 Assessment is conducted under the general authority of Boards of Examiners to ensure impartiality.

A2.9.4 The membership of a Board of Examiners must be competent to make judgements about the performance of individual students against specified criteria and in relation to comparable level/ programmes.

A2.9.5 The particular responsibilities of external examiners are to ensure that students are assessed fairly in relation to other students on the



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programme and to all students across the institution and that the standard and quality of the institution's awards is maintained.

A2.10 Equal Opportunities

A2.10.1 The institution will offer equal opportunities for access to its programmes within its admissions policy and pursue positive recruitment policies to ensure maximum open access as detailed in Section C1.9.

A2.10.2 Continuing professional development is provided by the institution for all staff to enhance their knowledge, reflect upon and develop their practice and contribute towards a fully inclusive culture for all its members.

A2.11 Students with learning disability/specific learning difference and/or specific learning need

A2.11.1 The institution requires all senior managers to lead staff in the development of good practice in relation to encouraging the recruitment, progression, retention and achievement of students within a learning disability/specific learning difference and/or specific learning need.

A2.11.2 The institution will act in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act prevailing at the time in all aspects of the student learning experience.

A2.11.3 The institution will, in particular, make reasonable adjustments to the support and assessment of the student whilst on any programme within the institution. Where the institution is unable to make reasonable adjustments, the student will receive support and advice in identifying alternative opportunities.

A2.11.4 Staff and students will be fully briefed and supported in managing the learning experience of students with a learning disability/specific learning difference and/or specific learning need and outcomes of the processes will be fully monitored, reviewed and evaluated to improve practice and assure enhancement of the learning experience.

A2.11.4 The institution will ensure that, where appropriate, an investigation into the range of ways in which ICT can be used to further support students with a learning disability/learning difference and/or specific



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learning need will be conducted to provide staff and students with the information that will enable them to make the best use of assistive technologies.

A2.12 Career Education, Information and Guidance

A2.12.1 Career education, information and guidance will assist the institution in preparing its graduates for their future careers as detailed in Section C1.6.

A2.12.2 Students with disabilities will have access to careers education, information and guidance that supports their progression to employment or further study.

A2.13 Public Information

A2.13.1 Any services, information or guidance provided for the benefit of staff, students and stakeholders will be subject to the normal quality assurance processes of the institution.

A2.13.2 The institution will ensure that publicity, programme details and general information are accessible and include explanations of how the entitlements of students with disabilities are met.

A3 Awards

A3.1 General

A3.1.1 The HE Academic Board is responsible for approving the title of any award granted under the HE Academic Regulations. The HE Academic Board must approve proposals for new awards before provision is developed. The institution awards are shown in section A.3.2.1.

A3.1.2 Programmes of study ('programmes') must be suitable for the fulfilment of the institution's general educational aims, and the standard of achievement required for the award to be demonstrated by the fulfilment of the aims.

A3.1.3 The institution's awards are generally streamed so that programmes incorporate intermediate awards with appropriate learning outcomes.



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- A3.1.4 Qualifications can only be conferred or recommended where a student has registered for, and successfully completed a programme leading to an approved award as detailed in A3.2.1.
- A3.1.5 The institution may approve individual programmes which do not themselves lead to a named award but lead to the award of academic credit and which may, under certain circumstances, count towards a specific award.
- A3.1.6 The institution may, for good reason, deprive any person of any award granted by the institution (or, in the case of a joint award, may do so jointly with the other institution(s)) or may recommend revocation to an appropriate awarding body. (Good reason includes academic fraud).
- A3.1.7 Where an award is recognised by, and subject to, the regulations of a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) and there is a conflict between these regulations and those of the PSRB, then the regulations of the PSRB shall have precedence.
- A3.1.8 Where PSRB modules are offered, students must take those modules in the order and combination (or at the level) stipulated by the PSRB.
- A3.1.9 The institution may agree to offer provision leading solely to awards and qualifications by external bodies. In such cases the Academic Regulations of the external body takes precedence over the institutional academic regulations in relation to the requirements for the conferment of the award.

A3.2 Awards of the institution

A3.2.1 The Awards

	FHEQ award level	College award level	Available as an intermediate award from
Masters degrees: MA, MBA, MSc, MEd Postgraduate Diplomas Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Postgraduate Certificate	7	7	Masters degrees



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	FHEQ award level	College award level	Available as an intermediate award from
Bachelors degrees: BA, BSc, BEd, BEng, LLB Professional Graduate Certificate in Education	6	6	Bachelors degrees
Foundation Degree (FdA; FdSc; FdTech; FdEng; FdEd, FdEd Lit; FdEd Num) Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) Higher National Diploma (HND)	5	5	Dip HE Bachelors awards
Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) Higher National Certificate (HNC)	4	4	FdA; FdSc; FDEng; FdTech; FdEd, FdEd Lit; FdEd
Other Awards: Certificate for Associate Teachers working in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS)	4	4	FdEd, FdEd Lit; FdEd
Certificate of Continuing Education	4	4	Cert HEHNC

A3.2.2 Aegrotat Awards: a Board of Examiners may use discretion to confer or recommend conferment of an aegrotat award subject to the requirements of the professional regulatory or statutory bodies where it is satisfied that, but for illness or other valid cause, a candidate would have qualified for the award. An aegrotat award is not classified.

A3.2.3 Posthumous Awards: the institution may confer/recommend conferment of an award posthumously provided the normal conditions of the award are satisfied. The award may be accepted on the student's behalf by a parent, spouse or other appropriate person.



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A3.2.4 **Transcript/Diploma Supplement:** all registered students receive an official transcript detailing their achievement on an annual basis and at the end of the registered programme.

A3.3 Title of Awards

A3.3.1 **Foundation Year** is a pathway for students who may not meet the regular entry requirements, for instance students who have not studied for many years, who's first language is not English or they would be unable to immediately cope with the academic element of Level 4 study. This will only be utilised in current and future partnerships at not at a college of NCG where we have a progression pledge for all level 3 students.

A3.3.2 **Certificate of Continuing Education (CertCE).** To qualify for the award of a Certificate of Continuing Education (Cert CE), a student must have passed a minimum of 60 credits at Credit Level 4

A3.3.3 **Foundation degree** programmes will lead to the award of either FdA, FdSc, FdTech, FdEng, FdEd, FdEdLit or FdEdNum. The award of FdA is generally used in art and design, the arts and humanities and areas of social science and business studies. The award of FdSc is generally used in areas of science, mathematics and their applications. The award of FdTech is generally used in the field of technology and its applications. The award of FdEng is generally used in the field of engineering and its applications. The award of FdEd is generally used in the field of education and its applications. FdEdLit and FdEdNum are used in the fields of education literacy and education numeracy respectively and their applications.

A3.3.4 **Bachelor degree** programmes will lead to the award of either BA, BSc, BEng, BEd, BMUs or LLB. The award of BA is generally used in art and design, the arts and humanities and areas of social science and business studies. The award of BSc is generally used in area of science, mathematics and their applications. The award of BEng is generally used in the field of engineering and its applications. The award of BEd is generally used in the field of education. The award of BMUs is used in the field of music. The LLB is used in the field of law. **The award of Graduate Diploma will be awarded to a student who completes 80 credits at level 6. The award of Graduate Certificate will be awarded to a student who completes 40 credits at level 6.**



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- A3.3.5 **Masters degree** programmes will lead to the award of either MA, MBA, MSc, MEd or MEng. The award of MA is generally used in art and design, the arts and humanities and areas of social science. The award of MBA is generally used in business and management studies. The award of MSc is generally used in areas of science, mathematics and their applications. The award of MEd is generally used in the field of education. The award MEng is generally used in the fields of engineering and its applications
- A3.3.6 **Higher Apprenticeships** lead to the achievement of an Apprenticeship Standard for a subject, or vocational area. The Higher Apprenticeship includes within it a qualification which will be a HE Award, usually at level 5 or a foundation degree. Some Higher Apprenticeships will include a HE award at level 6 or 7. This Award will be completed alongside employment. The HE Awards offered as part of the Apprenticeship Standards are aligned to the qualification descriptors and subject benchmark statements relevant to the level and subject being studied.
- A3.3.7 **Degree apprenticeships** lead to the achievement of an Apprenticeship Standard for a subject, or vocational area. In most instances, a Degree Apprenticeship includes within it a qualification which will be a HE Award, usually at level 6 or 7, a Bachelors degree or a Masters degree. This Award will be completed alongside employment. The HE Awards offered as part of the Apprenticeship Standards are aligned to the qualification descriptors and subject benchmark statements relevant to the level and subject being studied.

A3.4 Definition of Awards

- A3.4.1 Master's Degree is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 180 credit points at HE Level.
- A3.4.2 A Postgraduate Diploma is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credits points at HE Level.
- A3.4.3 A Postgraduate Certificate is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 60 credit points at HE Level.
- A3.4.4 A Postgraduate Certificate in Education is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 60 credit points at HE Level 7 and 60 credit points at HE Level 6.



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- A3.4.5 An Honours Degree is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at HE Level 6, 120 credit points at HE Level 5, 120 credit points at HE Level 4.
- A3.4.6 An Ordinary Degree is award for the attainment of a minimum of 60 credit points at HE Level 6, 120 credit points at HE Level 5, 120 credit points at HE Level 4.
- A3.4.7 An Honours Degree (top-up) is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at HE Level 6. The student must also have attained 120 credits at HE Level 5, 120 credits at HE Level 4.
- A3.4.8 A Graduate Diploma is awarded for attainment of a minimum of 80 credits at HE Level 6, 120 credits at HE Level 5 and 120 credits at HE Level 4.
- A3.4.9 A Graduate Certificate is awarded for attainment of a minimum of 40 credits at HE Level 6, 120 credits at HE Level 5 and 120 credits at HE Level 4.
- A3.4.10 A Foundation Degree is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at HE Level 4 and 120 credit points at HE Level 5. Candidates must have demonstrated the achievement of learning in work based learning and core skills.
- A3.4.11 A Diploma of Higher Education is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at HE Level 4 and 120 credit points at HE Level 5.
- A3.4.12 The Higher National Diploma is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at HE Level 4 and 120 credit points at HE Level 5.
- A3.4.13 The Certificate of Higher Education is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at HE Level 4.
- A3.4.14 The Higher National Certificate is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at HE Level 4.
- A3.4.15 A Certificate of Continuing Education (CertCE) is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 60 credits at HE Level 4.



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A3.4.16 A Foundation Year is awarded for the attainment of a minimum of 120 credit points at HE Level 3.

A3.4.17 Students studying a programme which is over one year in length are eligible for a contained award if they pass a year of study and choose to not return the following year.

A3.5 Award Level Descriptors

A3.5.1 **Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 3.** The descriptor for this level is closely aligned to the FHEQ level descriptors and is for any level 3 qualification, e.g. the Foundation Year or the Certificate of Continuing Education.

A3.5.2 Level 3 qualifications are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- A skills base of conceptual and factual knowledge with some appreciation of the Field of Study and of terminology used.
- An ability to apply those skills independently in a range of complex activities or with guidance when working with greater complexity.

A3.5.3 Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- Organise and communicate information.
- Apply pre-defined problem-solving techniques to given problems, drawing on information and data in familiar contexts.
- Synthesise information and formulate creative solutions to pre-defined issues or opportunities.
- Analyse and evaluate the relevance of information and data using pre-defined principles, frameworks, criteria and techniques.

A3.5.4 Holders of a Level 3 qualification will be able to apply an understanding of pre-defined areas of knowledge and demonstrate an awareness of theories, ideas, concepts within a familiar context. They will have an awareness of pre-defined ethical values and know the behavioural expectations in a familiar environment. They will be able to take responsibility for the evaluation of their own capabilities using pre-defined criteria in a familiar context.

A3.5.5 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 4 - Certificate of Higher Education. The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any Certificate of Higher Education which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can



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also be used as a reference point for other level 4 qualifications such as Higher National Certificate.

A3.5.6 Level 4 qualifications 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.

A3.5.7 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.

A3.5.5 Holders of a Level 4 qualification will have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

A3.5.6 Holders of a Level 4 qualification 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.

A3.5.7 **Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 5 - 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 can also be used as a reference point for other level 5 qualifications, including Diplomas of Higher Education, Higher National Diplomas, etc.



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- A3.5.8 Qualifications at level 5 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.
 - Knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subject(s), and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in their field of study.
 - An understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based in that knowledge.
- A3.5.9 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 in their field of study and in a work context.
 - 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 in their field of study and in a work context.
 - Undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.
- A3.5.9 Holders will have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.
- A3.5.10 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.



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A3.5.11 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6: 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 can also be used as a reference point for other level 6 qualifications, including bachelor's degrees, graduate diplomas and graduate certificates.

A3.5.12 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.
 - The ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, peer-reviewed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).

A3.5.13 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.

A3.5.14 And holders will have:



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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.

A3.5.15 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.

A3.5.16 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.

A3.5.17 **Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7: Master's degree**

The descriptor provided for this level of the framework is for any master's degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other level 7 qualifications, including postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas.

A3.5.18 **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.
- Understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical discipline.

Conceptual understanding that enables the student:



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- 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.

A3.5.19 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.

A3.5.20 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.

A3.5.21 Much of the study undertaken for master's degrees will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems. They will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

A3.5.22 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).

A3.5.23 Master's degrees are often distinguished from other qualifications at this level (for example, advanced short courses, which often form parts of continuing professional development programmes and lead to postgraduate certificates and/or postgraduate diplomas) by an



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increased intensity, complexity and density of study. Master's degrees, in comparison to postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diploma, typically include planned intellectual progression that often includes a synoptic/research or scholarly activity.

A3.6 Approval, Validation and Review

A3.6.1 All programmes offered by the institution are subject to the Approval, Validation and Review processes approved by HE Academic Board and are detailed in Section B. The procedures, which include those for implementing changes to programmes in approval, are detailed in the HE Quality Reference Manual and must be followed.

A3.6.2 Continued approval is determined through Periodic Review which takes place for all programmes every five years. This period may be extended by up to two years where HE Academic Board is convinced that this is necessary and that there are no issues relating to the on-going delivery of the programme affecting academic standards or the student experience.

A3.7 Withdrawal of Programme Approval

A3.7.1 The HE Academic Board may agree the withdrawal of programme approval if it has evidence that the programme is no longer meeting minimum acceptable academic standards or where recruitment levels are no longer viable.

A3.8 Flexible, work related, apprenticeships and distance learning

A3.8.1 A programme leading to an award of the institution delivered by flexible, work related or distance learning must meet HE required academic standards and comply with the prevailing Academic Regulations.

A4 Credit Accumulation and Transfer Framework

A4.1 General

A4.1.1 The institution Credit Accumulation and Transfer Framework governs all taught awards offered by the institution and is designed to facilitate transfer between full and part time modes of study, and particular combinations of programmes to include institutional transfer of credit.



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A4.1.2 Awards are defined in terms of the number and learning level of credits that must be attained to achieve the award. Learning is arranged in defined blocks called modules which have credit values. Combinations of credit rated modules are approved by HE Academic Board to form programmes which lead to awards or certificated learning.

A4.2 Mode of Study

A4.2.1 The institution credit framework accommodates the movement of students between full-time and part-time modes of study where available subject to approval by the institution's programme transfer process.

A4.3 Learning Hours

A4.3.1 In determining the number of credits required to achieve any award, it is recognised that one credit is equivalent to ten notional hours of academic learning time.

A4.4 Student Attendance

A4.4.1 Full engagement with designated learning activities of programmes and modules is required. Notification of illness and requests for leave of absence should be reported to the relevant college or collaborative partner curriculum area.

A4.4.2 Students should be clearly informed of any attendance requirements in respect of the programme during enrolment via the student agreement and sign posted to the attendance management policy within the student handbook.

A4.4.3 Where the aims and learning outcomes of the programme require it, the regulations may specify compulsory attendance. Individual modules may incorporate a specific attendance requirement as part of the assessment criteria for successful completion of a module.

A4.4.4 Programmes that confer a licence to practise, or where the degree is part of another programme, e.g. higher and degree apprenticeships, may require a minimum attendance level to meet the award, qualification or Apprenticeship Standard requirements.

A4.4.5 Where an attendance requirement is specified this must be approved within the approval and validation process.

A4.4.6 Following a four working week period of continuous lack of engagement with designated learning activities on programmes/



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modules, students who do not respond to communications from the relevant college or collaborative partner curriculum area, regarding attendance, may be deemed to have withdrawn from their programme. The date of withdrawal will be recorded as the last day of attendance.

A4.5 Modules

A4.5.1 Each module is self-contained with defined learning outcomes and a specified volume of credit at one level/intellectual standard only. Modules can also stand alone as coherent credit bearing learning experience in their own right.

A4.5.2 The development, delivery and assessment of modules is the responsibility of the relevant college or collaborative partner.

A4.5.3 Standard module sizes are as follows:

Standard module size	Other permitted module sizes
20 credit points	10, 15, 30 and 60 credit points
	Variation for educational reasons at approval and validation or PSRB

A4.5.4 Module outcomes will be benchmarked against level descriptors. The institution has a full set of level descriptors aligned to the FHEQ.

A4.5.5 The institution recognises the principles and mechanisms of the European Community Course Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

A4.5.6 Each credit achievement will be recorded on the individual student's transcript, along with the actual mark achieved.

A4.5.7 Module sizes other than those permitted in A4.5.3 may be approved exceptionally at approval and validation where it is demonstrated to the Panel it is necessary for the proper delivery of the curriculum.

A4.5.8 Modules may have specified pre-requisites/precursors. Where these are attached, they may determine the order in which a particular module or combination of modules is undertaken.

A4.5.9 Essential elements of learning within a named programme may be indicated through the specification of core modules at validation. Core modules are non-compensatable and must be passed for the named award to be conferred.



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- A4.5.10 Modules contributing to awards leading to a professional qualification may integrate academic and professional components.
- A4.5.11 A module's success and its associated credit must be ratified formally by a Board of Examiners or a Module Examination Committee.
- A4.5.12 Once ratified credit has been accepted towards the conferment of an award, such credit cannot be accepted as contributing towards the requirements for the conferment of another award at the same or lower level.
- A4.5.13 The institution may change module provision without notice but will ensure that all students who have legitimately registered for a named award will be able to follow an appropriate series of modules to qualify for the named award within the standard registration period.

A4.6 Programmes

- A4.6.1 Programmes lead to named awards (e.g. FdA Leadership and Management). They consist of specified combinations of modules validated for the named award that allow students to meet the overall award requirements in terms of credits, level and learning outcomes.
- A4.6.2 Programmes which lead to a professional qualification are required to comply with the standards of the relevant PSRB. Where approved at validation, programmes may include professional qualification components in addition to the module/credit requirements for the award.
- A4.6.3 All Foundation Degree programmes are developed with at least one specified route for progression directly to an honours degree incorporating a bridging programme where necessary. The operation and assessment of bridging programmes are subject to details set out in the validated programme specification.

A4.7 Core Elements of Learning

- A4.7.1 Within programmes/modules certain element of learning may be described as 'core' in terms of providing fundamental knowledge, skills or understanding that students must acquire to achieve successfully the required learning outcomes of the programme, subject or module.
- A4.7.2 Programmes leading to a professional qualification may include professional qualification components which are not credit rated. Such components will not contribute to any award classification but



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must be completed satisfactorily and assessed in order for the professional element to be awarded.

A4.8 Language of Study

- A4.8.1 English is the primary language of learning and assessment for all awards except where the study area involves foreign languages.