

Curriculum Management Tool Project

Glossary of Terms

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Approval

Approval is the decision taken to allow something to happen. It is undertaken by the Academic Board or a body to which it has delegated authority. The Academic Board takes responsibility for all the University's provision, and delegates the capacity to approve action to bodies that it oversees. Areas where approval decisions are delegated include, but are not exclusive to:

- The planning of a programme and partnerships (The Academic Strategy Committee, Faculty Programme Planning Executive).
- The validation process (Academic Board, Education and the Student Experience Committee and The University Validation Panel).

The Education and the Student Experience Committee directly manages external examiner appointments, on the advice of the External Examiner Appointments Panel and/or Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

The Academic Board also directly and indirectly approves a range of policies, such as Learning and Teaching policies.

Award

The University awards confirmation and/or certification of achievement by a student when that student meets the objectives set out in the approved programme or course of study. An award may include:

- An award recognised by the 'Framework for Higher Education Qualifications' for England, Wales and Northern Ireland,
- An award made by the University such as a University Diploma or University Certificate,
- The award of credit,
- Another award such as a certificate of completion where the University has agreed to keep a formal record of the award.

'Book and Pay' Courses

This term will be used by the CMT project to refer to non-credit bearing units of learning where no formal record is kept by the University.

Collaborative Provision

Collaborative Provision is an arrangement in which a higher education institution enters into partnership with another organisation to offer academic programmes together. Collaborative programmes are primarily those where students are registered as students of the University but study in whole or in part at another organisation. Students are registered as students of the University and receive an award from the University, the standard of which is guaranteed by the University as equivalent of the awards it delivers entirely itself.

Please note that some programmes may be taught at the University and at a partner, or at more than one partner simultaneously.

Combined Honours

Students may elect to follow programmes of study in two subjects. If more than one subject is studied, the student programme is called a Combined Honours Programme.

Conventions

This is a term used to refer to the creation of special regulations where a programme has requirements in addition or in variation to those set out in the University's Regulation and Credit Framework for the Conferment of Awards.

From 1 September 2013, the University will use the term Special Regulations in preference to this term.

Course

The University uses the term to refer to a short course.

Departments sometimes use the term to refer to the delivery of a small unit of learning, where no record is kept by the University, and which, by definition are outside the scope of the CMT.

Externally, a course is defined as a programme of study for which a student can apply to, either through UCAS or directly to the institution.

Credit

Credit is an educational currency that provides a means of quantifying learning achieved at a given level of study. It is awarded to students who have demonstrated that they have attained the specified intended learning outcomes of a module/programme. The amount of credit attributed or awarded is based upon an estimate of the notional average time

which it would take the student to acquire the specified learning at a given level. Credit is awarded for achievement at or above a threshold or pass level. One credit is attributed to 10 hours of notional learning time at a specified level.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is either:

- a) An assessment activity taken entirely for developmental purposes, which does not contribute to the summative mark for the module,
- b) A description of the fundamental purpose of assessment, by which a student acquires knowledge or skills, even where that assessment is also summative.

In order that assessment fully performs its formative role, modules will often include assessments other than the summative assessment taken at the end of the module.

Framework

The term 'framework' generally refers to an underlying set of ideas or concepts, which may be applied to specific instances.

From 1 September 2013, the University will manage the majority of its awards through the University's Regulations and Credit Framework for the Conferment of Awards, which will replace the Undergraduate Academic Framework and the Postgraduate Academic Framework, and the current regulations for the Conferment of Awards (subject to approval).

Two other Academic Frameworks will continue to exist: the Postgraduate Initial Teacher Education Framework and the Research Degrees Academic Framework.

The term 'framework' has historically been used in two other instances. First, there are frameworks which predate the introduction of the undergraduate and postgraduate frameworks, such as the CPD framework in the Faculty of Health and Social Care. This use has now been replaced with the word 'scheme'. Second, the term 'framework' has also been used for a cluster of programmes within a scheme, which have core modules in common. This use has now been replaced with the word 'suite'.

Full-time

120 credits are attributed to the learning acquired at a particular undergraduate level in a full-time academic year of approximately 30 weeks. One full-time academic year involves 1200 hours of notional learning time; one full time week involves 40 hours of notional learning time.

180 credits are attributed to the learning acquired at a particular postgraduate level in a full-time academic year, which is normally twelve months in duration.

In order for student activity to be considered as full-time by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) the following criteria must be met:

- a) The student is normally required to attend the institution, or elsewhere, for periods amounting to at least 24 weeks within the year of instance and, during that time, they are normally expected to undertake periods of study, tuition, learning in the workplace which amount to an average of at least 21 hours per week.
- b) Full-time fees are chargeable for the course for the year.

Learning Outcomes

Intended Learning Outcomes identify what a successful student is expected to achieve on the completion of an award. They embody the educational purposes and values of the overall learning experience within a programme of study and provide the strategic framework for the process of learning.

Level

Programmes are progressive in terms of the levels of subject knowledge, skills, and learning outcomes students attain. In line with 'The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland', this progression is demarcated into five levels.

- Level 4 – awards given at this level include Certificates of Higher Education
- Level 5 - awards given at this level include Diplomas of Higher Education and Foundation Degrees
- Level 6 – awards given at this level include Bachelors' Degrees and Bachelors' Degrees with Honours
- Level 7 - awards given at this level include Postgraduate Certificates, Postgraduate Diplomas and Master's Degrees
- Level 8 – awards given at this level include all Doctoral Degrees.

Modifications

Programme modifications are approved changes to a programme of study, which are made to maintain the currency of a programme. Modifications fall into two categories:

- 'Form A' modifications, normally to module titles or module assessment arrangements, which are a matter for consideration and approval by the appropriate Faculty Quality Committee
- 'Form B' modifications, where changes that are significant for the programme as a whole are being proposed. Depending upon the nature of the change, these modifications may be approved by the Faculty Quality Committee, or by the University validation procedure.

Module

Modules are the principal elements that make up programmes. Modules are discrete learning and teaching units.

Non-Credit Bearing Course

A non-credit bearing course is defined as a course that does not carry credit and may not have learning outcomes.

Pathway

A pathway of a programme will have its own overall learning outcomes, based on the study of a subset of specific modules, and will have a differentiated award title (normally given in brackets). The nature of pathways must be set out in the validation documentation. The Academic Strategy Committee must approve the name of a pathway.

Please note that in organisational terms there may be no difference between a programme containing different pathways and a suite containing different programmes.

Planning

The programme planning process tests the strategic and business case for a programme. It is conducted separately and prior to any decision on the academic case for a programme (validation). The programme planning process tests matters such as:

- Basic details of the programme (award title, credits, structure etc);
- Programme rationale;
- Fit within the Faculty and University academic portfolio;
- Market research that indicates whether students will want to take this programme;
- The extent to which various professional services departments have been consulted;
- How the risks of having the programme, or the risks likely to be attended in running the programme will be managed;
- Funding streams, or whether the programme will be reliant on student tuition fees;
- Predicted student numbers;
- Likely income and costs.

No programme may proceed to validation before it has gained planning approval.

Presentation (see also Session)

This term refers to the delivery of a course to a distinct group of students within a particular academic year and month.

Internally, this is referred to as a 'session'.

Programme

The word 'programme' is used in different ways across the University. It normally refers to a collection of modules to the value of at least 60 credits, which provides a coherent academic experience and leads to a named award.

The term 'programme' is sometimes used to refer to the work in one subject of a combined honours degree. This is incorrect and should be discouraged, in favour of the use of the term 'subject'.

Non-credit bearing programmes also exist within the University.

Please note that in organisational terms there may be no difference between a programme containing different pathways and a suite containing different programmes.

Programme Protocols

Programme protocols are arrangements which govern the management of programmes.

Route

When a programme contains a group or groups of optional modules then it is possible for two students to pursue different sets of options through their programme but still meet the same overall programme outcomes. These groups of options are known as 'routes'.

Scheme

A scheme is the set of rules particular to a given set of programmes. All Schemes fall within the regulatory requirements of the University.

Scheme Protocols

Scheme protocols are arrangements which govern the management of University Schemes.

Short Course

A short course is defined as provision of no more than 40 credits or 400 total learning hours, the learning outcomes of which are either at levels 4-7, or are commensurate with work at that level, which leads to

- The award of credit, and/or
- University summative assessment, and/or
- A certificate or transcript of award, issued by the University, and/or
- A formal record kept by the University Registry.

Session (see also Presentation)

This term refers to the delivery of a programme or module to a distinct group of students within a particular academic year and month.

Externally, this is referred to as a 'presentation' of a course.

Single Honours

A single honours programme is either located in a single subject or a coherent interdisciplinary grouping of modules in a specific area.

Stage

A stage is defined as a discrete element of an award which a student must pass to progress to the next stage of the award.

[It is worth noting here that a stage and a level are not necessarily the same. For undergraduate degrees taken on a full time basis, a stage and a level will be coterminous, but where a student is studying part time, the student may take a level over two years, each of which would be regarded as a stage. Similarly many Master's degrees, all of which are at level 7, consist of three stages.]

Stand-alone Modules

Stand-alone modules may be validated within a larger programme of study, or separately. Upon successful completion of a stand-alone module a student is awarded either credit or any other outcome that the module confers. Award of the stand-alone module outcome must be the student's study intention at the point of registration.

Starred Modules

A starred module is a stand-alone module that has not been validated as part of a programme. A starred module is validated in accordance with the arrangements set by the Education and the Student Experience Committee and can be offered centrally, or by a faculty or by a department. In practice, all starred modules are now language modules. Starred modules are available to students under certain conditions, unless a Scheme prevents it.

Subject

A subject refers to the contribution within a student programme that gives a discipline its coherence and identity, and defines what is expected of a student in terms of the techniques and skills needed to develop understanding. It may be composed of several sub-disciplines or of several subjects in the traditional sense.

Within the student record system (QL) curriculum set up 'Subject' is used as a level below Programme to define the General Modular Scheme subject area(s) for a combined degree e.g. French, Business Computing, Biosciences etc..

Suite

The term used for a cluster of programmes within a scheme, which have core modules in common.

Please note that in organisational terms there may be no difference between a suite containing different programmes and a programme containing different pathways.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is an assessment activity used for the purpose of measuring student achievement and results in a mark or grade, which will be used for the purposes of credit and/or award. Summative assessments are also formative in that they contribute to student learning.

Top-up Programmes

Bachelor's Degrees with Honours will always have 360 credits, a minimum of 120 of which will be at level 6. Some programmes do allow, however, for the achievement of 240 credits (i.e. 120 at level 4 and 120 credits at level 5) through the accreditation of prior learning. Such an arrangement might permit a student holding a relevant Diploma of Higher Education or a relevant Foundation Degree to enter directly into level 6 of an undergraduate degree. Similarly a student holding a PG Dip may enter directly into the third stage of a Master's Degree. The additional element that allows a student to top-up their existing qualification to a bachelor's degree is externally referred to as a 'To-up Programme'.

Validation

The Validation process determines whether a proposed programme of study is valid in academic and quality terms. It relies on input from academics from other higher education providers, who have significant expertise in the subject matter. Validations tests:

- Whether the programme aligns with national and subject reference points, e.g. The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and any relevant subject benchmark statements, or any PSRB reference points;
- Whether the programme would be comparable with programmes of a similar nature and level in other institutions;
- Whether the learning outcomes and are appropriate, and whether the assessment arrangements will support them;
- Whether the diet of modules appropriately supports the award title;
- Whether the programme is likely to provide students with a high quality academic experience.

No programme may commence before approval has been given by the Academic Board, confirming that the validation process is complete.