

Higher Education Qualifications Credit Framework (HEQCF)

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1. The Credit Framework

- 1.1 The University College's Higher Education Qualifications Credit Framework (HEQCF) is aligned to the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)¹ for England, Wales and Northern Ireland; the Higher Education Credit Framework for England² and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)³.
- 1.2 The basic unit of credit relates to 10 hours of notional learning time, e.g. 10 credits represents 100 hours notional learning time.
- 1.3 A standard academic year for a full-time undergraduate student equates to 120 credits (1200 notional hours) across two semesters; and for a full-time taught post graduate student equates to a maximum of 180 credits (1800 notional hours) across three trimesters. Other awards have notional learning time equivalent to their credit-rating subject to the formula given in para 1.2.
- 1.4 The relationship between UK Credit Accumulation Transfer Scheme (CATS) and the European Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (ECTS)⁴ is 1 ECTS to approximately two CATS, e.g. 5 ECT credits is equivalent to approximately 10 CATS.

2. Modules and assessment

- 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 FHEQ and the NQF.
- 2.2 Modules at level F are normally 15, 20 or 30 credits in size. At levels 4 – 7 modules are normally 15, 30 or 60 credits in size. Proposals to offer modules of credit values other than those indicated will be subject to approval through the Course and Module approval process.
- 2.3 Assessment typically occurs within each discrete module, although integrated assessment across cognate modules is also permitted when there is a pedagogic and/or professional benefit to such integrated assessment.
- 2.4 The overall weighted average for taught modules and the mark for the dissertation or equivalent, will be rounded to the nearest whole number – i.e. 49.5 will count as 50, 49.4 as 49.

3. Discreteness of awards and pathways

- 3.1 It is permissible for different discretely named awards (e.g. BSc (Hons) Subject A and BSc (Hons) Subject B) to share modules.
- 3.2 Where an award at level 5 (DipHE), level 6 (undergraduate honours degree) or level 7 (masters) comprises 50% of Subject A and 50% of Subject B taught modules (excluding dissertation or equivalent) the award shall be a 'joint' award and named as such (e.g. BSc (Hons) Subject A and Subject B).

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/list-of-qualification-levels>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/ects/users-guide/index_en.htm

- 3.3 Where there is sharing of modules a discretely named award may have designated pathways – that is the awards may have the same ‘root’ title with the pathway named in brackets (for example BSc (Hons) in Animal Management – the root award – and BSc (Hons) in Animal Management (Livestock Technology) – the pathway award. A pathway must have at least 30 credits unique to that pathway at level 5 (for both DipHE and undergraduate honours degree) and 30 credits plus the dissertation or equivalent at levels 6 or 7 (for undergraduate honours degree and Masters).

4. Qualifications and credit framework

- 4.1 The University College Higher Education Qualification and Credit Framework (HEQCF) can be found at Appendix 1 of this document; and should be read in conjunction with the following information regarding maximum length of study allowed.

5. Shorter credit bearing or non-credit bearing courses

- 5.1 If a short course is offered that does not contain enough credit to constitute an award of the University College or is non-credit bearing; it is important that the following conventions are followed to avoid any confusions with formal University College awards.
- 5.1.1 Courses must not be titled or advertised as a ‘Certificate’ or ‘Diploma’ unless in receipt of external professional recognition or accreditation which specifies the use of that title.
 - 5.1.2 Courses can be advertised as ‘recognised by Writtle University College’ but not as ‘accredited’ or ‘validated’.
 - 5.1.3 Participants can be issued with a ‘Certification of Attendance (if not assessed) or ‘Certification of Completion’ (if assessed).
 - 5.1.4 A ‘Certification of Completion’ may be considered for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) toward a subsequent award at the appropriate level subject to the discretion and agreement of the University College following individual application for APL. For example, an Associate Student may, having completed a module (or modules) apply for accreditation of certificated prior learning as part of their application to register on a full award.

Appendix 1. Qualification and Credit Framework

Qualification	FHEQ Level	Minimum Overall Credits to be Studied	Range of Credits Required	Usual Length of Programme	Maximum Period of Study Permitted
Integrated Masters Degree (e.g. MVP)	7	480 credits	360 credits at undergraduate level and 120 at level 7.	4 years f/t	6 years f/t
Taught Masters Degree (MA/MSc)	7	180 credits	180 credits of which at least 150 must be at level 7 including the dissertation or equivalent. A maximum of 30 credits may be taken from level 6.	1 year f/t	2 years f/t
Postgraduate Diploma♦ (PGDip)	7	120 credits	120 credits of which at least 90 must be at level 7. A maximum of 30 credits may be taken from level 6.	2 semesters f/t	2 years f/t
Postgraduate Certificate♦ (PGCert)	7	60 credits	60 credits of which at least 45 must be at level 7. A maximum of 15 credits may be taken from level 6.	1 semester f/t	1 year f/t
Bachelors Honours Degree – Top-Up (BA/BSc (Hons) – Top-Up)	6	120	120 credits at level 6.	1 year	2 years
Bachelors Honours Degree (e.g. BA/BSc (Hons) including options with Year in Industry and/or Foundation Year) (Final year is Stage 3)	6	360 credits	A minimum of 330 credits including a minimum of 90 credits at level 6. A maximum of 120 credits at level 4 are included.	3 years f/t 4 years f/t with year in industry or Foundation Year 5 years with both Foundation Year and year in industry	5 years f/t 6 years f/t with year in industry or Foundation Year 7 years with both Foundation Year and year in industry
Bachelors Ordinary Degree (e.g. BA/BSc) Exit award only (Final Year is Stage 3)	6	300 credits	A minimum of 300 credits including a minimum of 60 credits at Level 6.	3 years f/t	5 years f/t
Foundation Degree (FdSc/FdA) (Final year is Stage 2)	5	240 credits	225 credits at level 4 or above, including a minimum of 105 credits at level 5 or above (may include a maximum of 30 credits at level 6.)	2 years f/t	4 years f/t
Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE - Stage 2) **	5	240 credits	225 credits at level 4 or above, including a minimum of 105 credits at level 5 or above. (may include a maximum of 30 credits at level 6)	2 years f/t	4 years f/t
Certificate of Higher Education(CertHE – Stage 1) **	4	120 credits	120 credits at level 4 or above	1 year f/t	2 years f/t
Certificate of Continuing Education(CertCE – Stage 1)	4	60 credits	60 credits at level 4	1 year f/t	2 years f/t
Certificate of Completion Exit award only	F	120 credits	120 credits at level F	1 year f/t	2 years f/t
Certificate of Achievement Exit award only	F	60 credits	60 credits at level F	1 year f//t	2 years f/t

**Maximum period of study permitted includes periods of intermission.
Part-time routes may be available, the duration of the programme will be dependent on the credit load per year and subject to industrial placement years where applicable.*

***Indicates an award that may be both an entry level and exit award.*