# Quality Assurance Code of Practice

## Approval of New Courses of Study

Related documents available at: [Code of Practice statements | University of Bath](#)

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# 1 Purpose and Scope

1.1 This QA statement sets out the principles and process for approval of a new course of study and applies to:
- all taught courses of study leading to an award of the University of Bath
- research degrees with a taught element (for example professional doctorates, integrated PhDs)
- variants to an existing academic course (for example, the addition to an existing course of a new placement or study year abroad)
- new exit awards.

1.2 Where a proposed new course of study is to be delivered by or with a new or existing collaborative partner, then this QA statement should be read in conjunction with QA20 Collaborative Provision which sets out the additional steps to be followed for the approval of collaborative partners and taught courses. The approval process for joint research degrees is covered in QA20.

1.3 Where a new degree apprenticeship course is proposed, there will be specific requirements for approval (QA3 Annex I) and proposers should consult Academic Registry.

1.4 This QA statement should also be read in conjunction with the relevant University assessment regulations.

# 2 Principles and Overview

2.1 The University needs to ensure that any new course is consistent with the University's Strategy including the strategic pillar 'Driving excellence in education', is financially viable, and is academically appropriate and sound. The University also needs to ensure that it has the necessary capacity to deliver a high quality student learning experience.

2.2 The course approval process is intended to provide a high level of rigorous scrutiny to new course proposals whilst facilitating innovation and updating of the academic portfolio. It involves two main stages:

(i) **Stage One Initial Approval:** strategic consideration of a proposal for academic fit and financial viability including evidence of a viable and sustainable market
(ii) **Stage Two Full Approval:** a closer consideration of the detailed academic case.

2.3 The Course Specifications, regulations and the unit descriptions required in the course of this process must meet the standards of documentation expected under the principles of QA44 Course Handbooks and Course Specifications. (Guidance on drawing up Course Specifications is available under QA44 Annex B).

2.4 The process for the approval of new taught courses is underpinned by the requirement for external opinion from professional accrediting bodies, employers and, at the final stages, reports from one or more independent External Reviewers.

# 3 Timescales

3.1 In planning for the introduction of a new course, course proposers need to take into account:

- **lead time for inclusion in marketing publications:** the deadline for inclusion in the printed undergraduate prospectus is the December that falls 21 months prior to the first Autumn student intake; inserts can be made into the web version relatively quickly (see

also 5.9 below); it is advisable to allow 18 months prior to the first student intake for postgraduate provision in order that a viable cohort can be recruited

- **lead time for the completion of the <u>approval process</u> prior to processing of applications:** lead times should whenever possible be planned to provide for final approval from Senate and completion of any follow-up work required, at least one academic year prior to start-date to maximise recruitment potential
- **timescale for <u>timetabling</u> of teaching space:** information is normally gathered between Easter and Summer in the year prior to an Autumn student intake.

3.2 In most cases, it should be possible for the Department/School/Learning Partnerships Office (LPO) to take an initial idea through the approval process within an academic year: through Stage One Initial Strategic Approval in the one semester and then Stage Two Full Academic Approval in another. This is an indicative timeline only; for instance, courses involving collaborative provision may take longer to negotiate. There may be exceptional cases when the University supports a Department/School/LPO in acting more quickly in order to respond to an emerging strategic opportunity.

## 4      Preparing for the approval of a new course

4.1 The initial development of a new course of study takes place within a Department/ School/LPO or as a group development with others.  A list of the elements for consideration (internal and external) is provided in Annex A, The Academic Framework for Taught Courses (10 credits), and the Guidance Note, Guidance for Course Planners.

4.2 The Head of Department/School/LPO is responsible for incorporating an indication of planned new courses in departmental/School/partner college submissions during the annual planning round.

4.3 It is recognised that in some cases new initiatives will arise more quickly as the University takes advantage of emerging opportunities. Nevertheless, where new course proposals are included in a bid for external funding, Stage One Strategic Approval for the course(s) should be obtained from Board of Studies and Academic Programmes Committee (APC), as well as from University Doctoral Studies Committee (UDSC) in the case of research degree courses with a taught element, prior to submission of the bid. Further advice can be obtained from the Assistant Registrar in the relevant Faculty/School.

4.4 Where a new University award is being proposed (a list of existing awards can be found in Annex B), advice should be sought from the Academic Registry on proposing to Senate and Council the creation of a new University award, by amendment of Ordinance 14. Academic Registry will liaise with the Secretary to Council in providing advice.

## 5      Stage One Initial Strategic Approval

5.1 The aims of this stage are to:
- establish that the proposal fits with the University Strategy and forms a coherent pattern of provision with other existing or planned courses in the University;
- establish that the proposal is financially viable including if the market information/ intelligence is rigorously evidenced and robust;
- establish that the University has the necessary capacity in human and physical resources to deliver a high quality student learning experience in respect of the proposal;
- agree the course title, level and outline structure, with the understanding that this should not then *normally* change at the Full Approval stage (see 6.5);
- agree material information for inclusion in the digital prospectus;
- agree the proposed success criteria for the course;

- identify, where possible, any complex aspects, such as the need for exemptions from the University's Academic Framework (10 credits) (Annex A), on which early advice should be sought. The aim here is to resolve potential issues at an early stage and avoid unnecessary delays at the Full Approval stage.

5.2    In seeking Stage One Initial Strategic Approval for a new course, the Course Development Team will provide the following documentation. In 2023/24, Stage One is completed outside Curriculum Planner. Where the proposal is for a new exit award (i.e. that is not being recruited to), or for a new variant of an existing course, advice should be sought from Academic Registry in the first instance about relevant and proportionate documentation requirements:

- **the business case** on Form QA3.1, setting out anticipated student numbers and fees, staffing and resource requirements, estimated income, and estimated costs. The timetabling and space implications e.g. for new units or where block (non-modular) timetabling booking is required, should be clearly stated. The business case on form QA3.1 needs to be approved by the University Executive Board (UEB), prior to presentation of the course for Stage One Initial Strategic Approval at APC. The Committee meets regularly. Advice can be sought from Departmental and Faculty Accountants.

- a **brief rationale** for the new course with reference to the University Strategy, the University's Curriculum Design Principles (Annex C), and the strategic aims of the Faculty/School/LPO; and confirmation of support from all relevant Head(s) of Department(s) or equivalent in the School (including the Head(s) of any Department(s) which would provide service teaching). Entry requirements for the course should be described here. There is no specific template/format for the rationale and it can be provided as a cover paper for the approving committee. QA3.1 includes a section on links to University strategy. Information provided in QA3.1 can be signposted rather than duplicated in the rationale.

- a **draft Course Specification** (QA44 Annex B) completed with input from Faculty Marketing, setting out the title, level, anticipated start date, draft intended learning outcomes, and course structure including the diet of core units and draft information on optional units, alongside the credit value of the units; and any partnership arrangements or professional accreditation, in order that the aims and shape of the proposed course can be clearly discerned, and material information is available for marketing the course.

- completed with input from Faculty Marketing, as applicable (Form QA3.6):
  o    for **undergraduate** courses, synopses for compulsory units and a generic description of the options available in each course year
  o    for **postgraduate taught** courses, compulsory and optional unit synopses, and a generic description of the options available by semester.

- **market information** setting out the qualitative and quantitative evidence of the size and nature of the potential market, the estimated size of the applicant pool, market trends in the discipline, and competitor activity (Form QA3.3). Advice on developing a marketing strategy and establishing whether a market exists for the provision is available from Faculty marketing teams and central Marketing,  UG/PGT Admissions, the Student Recruitment team and the International Relations Office. In certain instances, where the costs and risks to the University of approving and offering a new course are clearly very low, a more limited marketing case may be acceptable. For example, this could apply to the development of a new variant to an existing successful course.

- **success criteria** (also on Form QA3.1) against which the course will be reviewed after two full years of operation: between three and five criteria (covering for example recruitment, progression to Masters and/or PhD courses and/or student feedback statistics) to be approved by APC.

- **nominated Course Development Team Leader and Team** which should normally include representatives from all academic departments substantially involved with the proposal.

- **any other relevant background information**, highlighting any substantive issues likely

to arise in relation to the University's Academic Framework (see Annex A), for example a need to seek exemption from relevant assessment regulations, the need to establish a new category of award, or seek an exemption from the semester pattern.

## Appointment of External Reviewers

5.3    The input and advice of approved External Reviewers may form part of the documentation for consideration at the first stage of the process and are normally a requirement for formal report for Stage Two Full Academic Approval. The course development team should present their nominations for External Reviewer(s) early in the process for approval by the Chair of the relevant Board of Studies:

- two External Reviewers should be appointed for completely new course proposals, at least one of which should be familiar with UK academic standards in relation to the proposed course; one may be a professional/industrial specialist. The External Reviewers should be selected to provide informed comment on the various elements under consideration e.g. collaborative provision, innovative initiatives, elements of continual professional development or work-based learning.
- in particularly complex or innovative cases, the Chair of Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee (CPAC) may require the attendance of an External Reviewer at the meeting of the Committee.
- one External Reviewer only will be required for variant proposals where a substantial portion of the course content already exists.
- at the discretion of the Chair of CPAC, External Reviewer input will not normally be required at Stage Two for proposals for a new exit award that will not be recruited to and does not contain any new taught units, or for a course variant involving the addition or removal of a placement element only
- in determining approval of suitable nominees, the following points for the assurance of independence and objectivity should be taken into account:
  - o    the principles for the appointment of External Examiners (see QA12 section 4);
  - o    the detail of the proposed External Reviewer's (s') CV(s), which should include a section detailing any previous association with the University.
- existing or recent (up to three years since the end of their role) External Examiners may not be appointed as External Reviewers, but can give valuable advice to Course Development Teams.

## Faculty-level consideration: Faculty/School Board of Studies

5.4    Proposals for Stage One Initial Strategic Approval will first be considered by the relevant Faculty/School Board(s) of Studies. They are responsible for considering:

- if the proposal fits with the strategic aims of the Faculty/School/LPO and forms a coherent pattern of provision with other existing or planned courses within the Faculty/School;
- if the appropriate consultation has taken place, and in principle support has been received from all the Departments/School potentially affected by the proposal; Marketing information must be agreed with the Marketing teams;
- that there is otherwise sufficient evidence that a proposed new course will meet the requirements of APC (see 5.1 and 5.2 above).

5.5    In cases of cross-Faculty/School proposals, the proposal must be considered by each of the Boards of Studies involved.

5.6    For new research degree courses with a taught element, the proposal must also be considered by UDSC prior to consideration by APC.

## University-level consideration: Academic Programmes Committee (APC)

5.7  Once considered by the Faculty/School Board of Studies (and UDSC if applicable), proposals for Stage One Initial Strategic Approval will be sent to APC which will consider the points set out in 5.1 above.

5.8  Following Stage One Initial Approval the Secretary to APC will advise the Course Development Team, Academic Registry and the relevant Recruitment and Admissions Team of the new course for inclusion in the following publications, as appropriate:
- UCAS database and website;
- relevant postgraduate course listings (e.g. Prospects);
- University of Bath prospectuses.

5.9  Once Stage One Initial Strategic Approval is given by APC, the Department/School/LPO may advertise the course. All advertising must clearly state that the course is subject to approval. Applications cannot be processed until Stage Two Full Academic Approval has been received.

5.10  Where more than eighteen months has elapsed between the granting of Stage One Initial Strategic Approval and Stage Two Full Academic Approval commencing, renewal of Stage One Initial Strategic Approval must be sought. This will give the University the opportunity to satisfy itself that the strategic and business cases remain valid.

## Fast tracking through Stage One Initial Strategic Approval

5.11  Fast tracking through Stage One Initial Strategic Approval consists of permitting consideration by electronic circulation rather than at a scheduled meeting – or, where that is not possible, firstly by the Chair(s) of the Board(s) of Studies on behalf of the Board(s), and on that recommendation, for approval by the Chair of the APC. Consideration for fast tracking is by exception only. Further guidance on the appropriateness of fast tracking may be obtained in the first instance from Academic Registry. The documents to be submitted for Stage One Initial Strategic Approval remain the same for fast tracking as for the normal process, proportionate to the nature of the proposal.

5.12  A proposal for a new course may be considered for fast tracking through Stage One Initial Strategic Approval where there is a compelling case to do so, meaning that it would be clearly disadvantageous to progress the proposal in accordance with the standard committee schedule and any associated risks can be managed. For example, fast tracking may be appropriate for proposals which are the subject of a submission to bid for external funding and which have a very short deadline, where it can be demonstrated that the timing of the normal approval process would result in the loss of the opportunity to bid. Agreement to fast track a proposal at Stage One should be sought in advance from the Chair(s) of the Board(s) of Studies and of APC, providing evidence to justify fast tracking.

5.13  The Chair of either the Faculty/School Board of Studies or APC may refer the proposal back for further work or consult with other members before making decisions on whether:
- the circumstances are appropriate for fast tracking;
- the case presented for Stage One approval is adequate.

# 6      Stage Two Full Academic Approval

6.1     The aim of Stage Two Full Academic Approval is to undertake scrutiny of the academic detail of the proposed new course, namely the:

(i)     appropriateness of standards in accordance with the level and title of the award

(ii)    academic coherence of the course:

(iii)   alignment with the University's Curriculum Design Principles (Annex C) and the Assessment for Learning Design Principles (Annex D), including:

- appropriateness of the scheduling of assessment, and the range of assessment methodologies in relation to the discipline and aligned to the learning outcomes and in consideration of the University's approach to anonymous marking (see QA16 Assessment Marking and Feedback);

- verification that the course intended learning outcomes (ILOs) will be met by all who would graduate under the normal assessment and award provisions (e.g. by use of Designated Essential Units/Must Pass Units to underpin requirements without which the named award could not be made);

(iv)    nature of the learning opportunities offered by the course, and opportunities to enable all students within the diverse student body to achieve the learning outcomes

(v)     relationship between the course and current research in the field

(vi)    availability of the resources necessary to support the course

(vii)   relationship between the course and the requirements of professional accrediting or regulatory bodies, employers' expectations

(viii)  the role of placement or work based learning (where relevant)

(ix)    content of the Course Specification proposed for publication.

6.2     Approval at this stage will check specifically that the course and its intended learning outcomes are aligned to the appropriate descriptor for higher education qualification as set out in the Office for Students condition B5 (Sector-recognised standards)  and appropriately engaged with any relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. This will be explicitly recorded in the minutes of CPAC where a new course is recommended for approval.

## Faculty-level consideration: Faculty/School Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee

6.3     Prior to the complete documentation being prepared (see 6.9) for submission to CPAC, draft documentation should be submitted to the Faculty/School Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee(s) (F/SLTQC) using Curriculum Planner[1]. Ideally, this should occur soon after Stage One Initial Approval has been granted, so that the Committee's feedback may guide development of the final full documentation. The Committee will review:

- academic content and coherence
- academic standards and quality
- relationships with existing provision, and
- conformity to the University's Academic Framework.

6.4     Although it is for F/SLTQC(s) to determine which elements of draft documentation they wish to routinely review for this purpose, it should normally include as a minimum:

- the draft full Course Specification
- the course ILO mapping document (Form QA3.4)
- the assessment mapping (Form QA3.5)
- course regulations where these are not governed by the relevant assessment regulations
- all unit descriptions.

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[1] Stage 2 approval is undertaken using Curriculum Planner, with some documentation required for approval being prepared outside Curriculum Planner and then uploaded into Planner for committee consideration. Further guidance is available from Academic Registry.

The Course Development Team should normally be invited to attend the relevant F/SLTQC when the draft documentation is under consideration.

6.5     If there are any substantial changes to the proposal since Stage One Initial Strategic Approval, it is the responsibility of the Course Development Team to draw this to the attention of the relevant F/SLTQC and ensure that a clear case is being made for the changes, together with assurances that this will not entail an impact on resources, the University's profile/marketing, or bring resource implications for other Departments or their equivalents (such as through changes to teaching patterns). If there is substantial doubt about these aspects, then it is open to the F/SLTQC to refer the proposal back for Stage One Initial Strategic Approval.

6.6     Where a new course of study involves collaboration between Departments or their equivalents in more than one Faculty/School, the key draft documentation should be reviewed by each of the relevant F/SLTQCs (or an ad hoc forum comprising representatives from all the relevant F/SLTQCs).

6.7     Where the new course involves a research element (such as an Integrated PhD or professional doctorate course) the Faculty Doctoral Studies Committee (FDSC) should also consider the draft documentation at this stage. Advice can be sought from Academic Registry on meeting this requirement in an appropriate and streamlined way.

6.8     The Chair of the F/SLTQC is responsible for signing off the final key documentation for a new course for submission to CPAC.

## University-level consideration: Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee

6.9     For Stage Two Full Academic Approval, the following documentation will be required to be submitted to the Secretary to CPAC via the Assistant Registrar in the Faculty/School, using Curriculum Planner (see also 6.3 above):

- **introduction and rationale** for the proposed course.  There is no specific format for this. However, **it should include**:
    - reference to the Curriculum Design Principles (Annex C)
    - highlighting of key points for consideration, such as developments since Stage One Initial Approval, details of consultation undertaken, etc
    - a web link to the relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s), if applicable
    - a web link to the relevant Foundation Degree benchmark, Masters, or Doctoral degree characteristics, if appropriate
    - the rationale for any exemption required from the University's Academic Framework (10 credits) (Annex A) including the consequences for any other courses or on resources.

- **extracts of relevant minutes** from Board(s) of Studies, APC, F/SLTQC(s), and FDSC(s) / UDSC where appropriate
- the full **Course Specification** including the course structure which must be fully differentiated in respect of any exit awards and full-time/part-time study if applicable. Any changes to descriptive text for the prospectus (as contained in the Course Specification) since Stage 1 should have input from Faculty Marketing prior to submission. The Course Development Team should bear in mind that the Course Specification is student-facing material and should not contain information that is relevant for approval purposes only (the latter should be provided in the introduction/rationale).
- **unit descriptions** in full, including unit synopses; with assessment information aligned to the Assessment Taxonomy (Annex E)

- evidence that course intended learning outcomes can be met through completion of the **mapping of course intended learning outcomes** against units (Form QA3.4)
- a course-level **assessment strategy and mapping** (for the mapping template, see Form QA3.5); the strategy should refer to the Assessment for Learning Design Principles (Annex D) and both should be aligned to the Assessment Taxonomy (Annex E)
- **course regulations** – where these are fully governed by the relevant assessment regulations, this should be indicated in the 'course assessment regulations' section of the Course Specification(s) . In other cases where a more distinctive set is required (e.g. some PGR courses) specific detail should be provided separately. Annex A provides further detail
- written **submission from the External Reviewer(s)** on the above documentation, to be provided at least one week before the date of the meeting, although a written submission may be dispensed with if the External Reviewer(s) will be attending the relevant meeting of CPAC
- a written **response from the Course Development Team Leader** to the External Reviewer(s) report (not required if the External Reviewer is attending).

6.10 The full proposal will be considered at a meeting of CPAC. Where appropriate, it may be possible for similar courses in cognate disciplines to be considered together. Advice should be sought on this in advance from Academic Registry. Where particularly complex or innovative courses are being considered, on the request of the Chair, one or more of the External Reviewers may be asked to attend the meeting, to assist the Committee directly with its decisions. The Course Development Team Leader, and representatives from the Course Development Team if appropriate, will also be invited to take questions from the Committee.

6.11 It is the responsibility of CPAC to employ its specialist expertise, with the input from the External Reviewer and any invited internal expert attendees, to undertake detailed scrutiny of the course proposal in accordance with the aims set out in paragraph 6.1 and to make a recommendation to Senate. CPAC will assure itself that any issues previously raised by staff or committees during the course approval process have been adequately resolved. However, the Course Development Team should ensure that Stage One issues are adequately resolved before submitting Stage Two proposals to CPAC.

6.12 CPAC is responsible for the consideration and approval of requests for exemption from elements of the University's Academic Framework (Annexes A and B).

6.13 CPAC has three options open to it: to recommend to Senate
i) approval of the proposal
ii) approval of the proposal subject to conditions that must be met by specified date(s)
or
iii) non-approval of the proposal with requirement for further work and re-presentation to a future meeting of CPAC.

6.14 Completion of conditions must be signed off by the Chair of CPAC.

6.15 Education, Quality & Standards Committee is responsible for approval of any exemptions required from University assessment regulations.

6.16 The Secretary of the Committee will report CPAC's recommendation in summary form to Senate, which is responsible for full and final approval of the new course. Once full and final approval is granted, the Secretary of Senate will log the committee decision in Curriculum Planner in order to notify relevant staff, including in Academic Registry to enable completion of course set-up in the University student record system (SAMIS).

## Stage Two 'light touch' approval process

6.18    'Light touch' Stage Two Full Academic Approval consists of agreeing modified paperwork and scrutiny requirements (noting that this is different to potential Stage One 'fast tracking' arrangements and requires separate agreement to proceed).

6.19    The Chair of CPAC may consider and approve requests from Departments/the School for lighter touch paperwork and scrutiny requirements in relation to Stage Two Full Academic Approval of new courses where the potential benefits are considered to outweigh the risks. For example, this is likely to be appropriate for new exit awards associated with existing courses where no or very small additional resources will be needed and no separate marketing will be undertaken, or for new variants constructed substantially from existing units and requiring only marginal additional resources. Further guidance on this may be obtained from Academic Registry.

# 7    Review and Monitoring

7.1    New courses of study and any recommendations from CPAC made at the time of Stage Two Full Academic Approval will be monitored by F/SLTQCs through External Examiners' reports, annual monitoring processes and periodic reviews, drawing upon feedback, such as unit evaluation, student surveys and proceedings of Staff/Student Liaison Committees.

7.2    The impact of subsequent amendments to units and courses will be monitored through the processes required by QA4 Amendments to Courses of Study and Approval of New Units, External Examiners' reports, annual monitoring processes and periodic review, drawing upon feedback, such as unit evaluation, student surveys and proceedings of Staff/Student Liaison Committees.

7.3    After two full years of operation APC will review new courses of study against the success criteria identified by the course team (see 5.2 above). If the criteria are not met the course will be discontinued unless there are strong grounds to indicate otherwise.

| Statement Details | |
|---|---|
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| **Antecedents:** | *Education, Quality and Standards Committee* — 19 October 2023     Minute TBC<br>29 June 2022     Chairs Action (to revise annex H) |

| **Antecedents:** (continued) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Quality Assurance Committee* | Minutes     289, 335, 491, 638, 742,     794<br>1 July 2008     Minute 857(7) & (8)<br>3 July 2009     Minute 976(7)<br>1 Dec 2009     (Chair's Action: rev to Annex B)<br>13 July 2010     Minute 1098(1) |
| | *University Learning Teaching and Quality Committee* | 13 July 2011 – 16 July 2019:<br>Minutes 120, 212, 279, 428, 552, 671, 722, 671, 807, 940, 1002, 1070,1150, 1197 |
| | *Academic Programmes Committee* | 7 March 2012     Minute 55 |
| | *Senate* | New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations (NFAAR)<br>9 April 2008 (Minute 12740) and 11 June 2008 (Minute 12782).<br>NFAAR revisions for PGT:  14 April 2010 (Minute 13110)<br>NFAAR revisions for FD/HY/CPD: 8 June 2011, Minute<br>Review of Programme Processes and Committee Structures: 14 April 2010, S09/10-138, Minute 13112<br>Year Long Units: 13 February 2008, Minute 12704. 24 October 2007, Minute 12593. 10Oct2001 Minutes 11284, 11940, 11993, 12144, 12593,<br>Effectiveness Review of Senate, 2006.<br>Report of the Working Party on Faculty Structure, S01/02-4<br>Streamlining NFA documentation, October 2015 (Minute 13992)<br>8 June 2022 (Minute 15155) |
| | QA17 | V1.1 |
| | QA34 | V2.0 |
| **Related Documentation:** | <u>External</u><br>Office for Students, <u>Securing student success: Regulatory framework for higher education in England</u><br>QAA <u>UK Quality Code for Higher Education</u><br>    •    Advice and Guidance: <u>Course Design and Development</u><br><u>Information for Students: A guide to providing information to prospective undergraduate students</u><br><u>Higher education: consumer law advice for providers</u><br><br><u>Sector-recognised standards</u> (Office for Students condition of registration B5): descriptors of higher education qualifications<br>QAA <u>Subject Benchmark Statements</u><br><br><u>Internal</u><br><u>University Ordinances;</u><br><u>Regulations for Students;</u><br>QA44 Annex B:  Course Specification template<br>University <u>assessment regulations</u> | |
| **Author:** | Academic Registry | |

# ANNEX A - THE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK FOR TAUGHT COURSES (10 CREDITS)

## 1.    Introduction

1.1    The University's Academic Framework (10 credits) is composed of decisions previously taken by Senate and supersedes the framework used for courses approved prior to curriculum transformation, which is provided in Annex B of QA4 Amendments to Courses of Study and Units and Approval of New Units.

1.2    A course of study leading to a named award within the University's unitised Academic Framework comprises a defined number of discrete units. The design of new courses must align with the provisions of the Academic Framework as set out below under 'Terminology'. An approved exception is the use of Credit Accumulation & Transfer Scheme (CATS) credits to express credit values for postgraduate online courses that use NFAAR-PGOLC assessment regulations.

## 2    Terminology

2.1    Where the term *must* is used in the Academic Framework, all course design must meet this parameter. Exemptions will not be possible due to the nature of the parameter, which is either set externally by sector bodies, or a necessary requirement for all taught courses due to Senate-agreed institutional standards.

2.2    Where the term *may* is used, this describes what is permissible within certain limits.

2.3    Where the term *should* is used, it is expected that course design will follow this parameter. Requests for exemption from "should" elements of the University's Academic Framework require approval by the Courses and Partnerships Approval Committee (CPAC). Requests will normally be considered at Stage Two Full Approval, although approval may be sought earlier where appropriate from the same Committee. The exception to this is exemptions from assessment regulations, which are approved by the Education, Quality and Standards Committee (EQSC).

2.4    Such requests should be accompanied by a clear rationale for the exemption being sought. Exemption from unitisation is normally only permitted on the grounds that the provision requires

collaboration with partner organisations or has constraints on the pattern of delivery dictated by the requirements of professional bodies.

## 3    External requirements

3.1    Course design must meet the following external requirements:

   a.    Sector-recognised standards (as set out in Condition B5 of the Office for Students Conditions of Registration)

   b.    Subject Benchmark Statements (where applicable)

   c.    Accrediting body requirements (where applicable)

   d.    Statutory reporting and student finance requirements (parameters advised by Academic Registry).

## 4.    Credit and unit design

4.1    Units must be designed in ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).

4.2    Courses must contain one or more units of study in a course year.

4.3    Each unit must be mapped to at least one of the Course Intended Learning Outcomes.

4.4    Each unit must have its own Unit Intended Learning Outcomes, and it must be possible for the Unit Intended Learning Outcomes to be achieved by all students.

4.5    Course design should be based on a standard unit size of 10 ECTS (200 notional study hours). Other unit sizes should be sized in increments of 5 ECTS. The minimum unit size should be 5 ECTS. An academic year for full time undergraduates of 60 ECTS will equate to 1200 notional study hours.  An academic year for full time postgraduate taught students of 90 ECTS will equate to 1800 notional study hours.

4.6    Each unit must be designed to a specific FHEQ level. Unit Intended Learning Outcomes, content, and summative assessment must reflect that level.

4.7    Each course must be designed in accordance with the relevant requirements for total credit value and for credit at each FHEQ level (see QA3 Annex B).

4.8    There should be no shared teaching between undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses.

4.9    At FHEQ level 7 all units on a course must be offered at level 7.

4.10    Undergraduate courses should normally contain a maximum of eight units of study in a course year. Postgraduate taught courses should normally contain a maximum of twelve units of study in a course year.

4.11    Director of Studies approved units may be used as an optional unit, but must only be agreed, for a student, after the timetable has been finalised.

4.12    The FHEQ level 4 course year should not normally contain optional units.

4.13    Course years at FHEQ level 5 may contain a maximum of 10 ECTS at level 4 where this is pedagogically desirable and academic standards can be assured. Any level 4 credits taken at FHEQ course year level 5 must be outside the subject(s) of the award.

4.14    Course years at FHEQ levels 6 may contain a maximum of 10 ECTS taken at level 5, where this is pedagogically desirable and academic standards can be assured. Any level 5 credits taken at FHEQ course year level 6 must be outside the subject(s) of the award.

4.15 In line with expectations on award titles set out in the FHEQ, an "and" course must be designed with an approximate 50% of credit from each subject in its title. A "with" course must be designed with at least 60% of credit in the lead subject and a minimum 25% of credit from the secondary subject.

4.16 Units must be designated as compulsory or optional course requirements. Any Designated Essential Units (DEUs) / Must Pass Units (MPUs) must also be specified in course design.

    a. **Compulsory** units are those components of a course of study which must be taken by all students; in the assessment regulations context some or all of these might also be DEUs/MPUs;

    b. **Optional** units are those units that students can select from a prescribed range specified within the course of study or other, Director of Studies-approved units. In the assessment regulations context, some or all optional units might also be DEUs/MPUs.

4.17 Additionally, units may have the following features:

    a. **Generally available units** are units offered to students across all departments of the University.

    b. **Extra-curricular** units are taken outside of and in addition to the course of study, up to a maximum of 5 additional credits per year (with the prior approval of the Director of Studies). They can be chosen by a student but do not contribute to progression requirements, or to the final degree classification. Credits achieved in these units may count towards an undergraduate award of Certificate of Higher Education or Diploma of Higher Education.

## 5.    Placements and Study Abroad

5.1 Courses may incorporate a placement or study-period abroad that is described as a unit or set of units, with a total credit value that represents the approximate total period required (normally a credit value equivalent to a course-year or one semester).

5.2 For courses containing 'sandwich years' or 'thin sandwich' elements, course teams must refer to relevant guidance on definitions and parameters relating to fees, funding and statutory reporting, including in relation to the minimum duration of sandwich activity.

5.3 Placement and study-abroad units may contribute towards the final award classification. Course teams must specify whether they do so as part of course design and approval. Course teams must refer to guidance on the specification and features of placement/study-abroad units.

5.4 Credit achieved through a placement or study abroad unit does not normally contribute to an exit award, unless explicitly stated as part of the course approval.

## 6.    Assessment

6.1 Each unit must be assessed through summative assessment designed to test the relevant unit intended learning outcomes. The level of achievement will be recorded as the unit mark.

6.2 Two or more units in a course year may be wholly or partially assessed by synoptic summative assessment. Course teams must seek guidance from the Centre for Learning & Teaching (CLT) and Academic Registry when designing such assessment.

6.3 Unit results must be calculated as specified in assessment regulations. The sum of the weightings of the summative assessments in a unit must add to 100%.

6.4 Pass/fail units must not carry a weighting and do not contribute to degree classifications.

6.5 The pass mark for FHEQ levels 4-6 must be 40%. The pass mark for level 7 units (both

Undergraduate Integrated Masters[2], and Postgraduate Taught) must be 50%.

6.6    There should be no more than 12 Course Intended Learning Outcomes. An additional outcome should be in place for each placement/study abroad course variant.

6.7    The course structure should ensure that the course learning outcomes are met by all who would graduate under the normal assessment and award provisions, e.g. by using DEUs/MPUs to underpin requirements without which the named award could not be made.

6.8    Courses should contain formative assessment and feedback opportunities to support student learning.

6.9    The unit description must specify supplementary assessment requirements.

## 7.    Progression/Award

7.1    There should normally be no progression requirements within an undergraduate course year.

7.2    Prerequisite units may be specified, but may not need to be passed prior to progression to the subsequent unit. Where a prerequisite unit is designated essential for progression (a DEU/MPU) the unit must first be passed before progression to the subsequent unit.

7.3    Course design may allow a proportion of unit credit that can be condoned. Course design may allow some unit failure in the final year. Where this is not desirable to course design, units (and their credit) may be designated essential to be passed before progression or award (DEUs/MPUs).

7.4    Unit credit must not be divided or partially awarded.

7.5    Courses should apply the University's agreed methods and weightings to calculate progression and award eligibility and classification, as described in assessment regulations.

## 8.    Registration

8.1    Courses must be designed to meet maximum registration periods, which will be set out in regulation.

## 9.    Assessment Regulations

9.1    Regulation 15.2.b states that "Schemes of Study" are those documents which set down the approved curriculum, rules, requirements and scheme of assessment for a course of study. This Regulation is normally realised in detailed Course Specifications (see QA44 Course Handbooks and Course Specifications).

9.2    Course structures are described in course specifications.

9.3    Course specifications will stipulate the assessment regulations that apply to a given course. Any approved additional requirements beyond those set out in assessment regulations and the Regulations for Students will be specified in the course specification.

9.4    Assessment regulations will specify:

- progression routes throughout a course and any requirements for a student at each stage to progress
- the timing and nature of any supplementary assessment, and mechanisms for retrieval of credit

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[2] The pass mark for Undergraduate Integrated Masters units must be 40% when delivered prior to 2026/27.

- the criteria for how a final degree classification is reached
- the weighting of individual units in the calculation of the final award, including classification where appropriate
- the criteria for an interim award or transfer to another defined award
- where appropriate, any criteria for transfer points between courses (e.g. between a Bachelors and undergraduate Masters course)
- criteria for the award of generic exit awards (e.g. CertHE, DipHE, PGCert, PGDip)

9.5 Where the approved specific requirements of a course differ from those specified in the relevant assessment regulations, this must be detailed in full in the course specification.

9.6 Student visa requirements may constrain course transfer options for international students, therefore course designers wishing to make transfer from one course to another mandatory under specific circumstances must consult the Student Immigration Service.

## 10. Assessment at the unit level

10.1 Credit will be awarded for successful completion of a unit. This will normally be defined as the achievement of the pass mark for the aggregate of all summative assessment(s). Unit descriptions should specify and define any additional criteria for the award of credit to be applied at the level of individual components of assessment.  In particular, where
- a candidate must pass each individual component of the assessment in order to complete the unit successfully;
- the candidate is required to reach a minimum threshold in any, or all, of the components of the assessment,

this should be specified in the unit description and will be recorded in the online unit catalogues.

10.2 In instances where the teaching of units at different FHEQ levels is shared, the learning outcomes and assessment must be appropriately differentiated. Sharing of UG and PGT teaching requires an exemption from this framework. The Academic Registry should be consulted if this need is anticipated.

# ANNEX B - University of Bath award titles and levels of credit within the sector recognised standards

| Type of Award | Highest FHEQ Level | T / R* | Award as shown on certificate | Abbr. | Notional Hours | Min Duration | Total ECTS credits | Minimum levels of credit | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Doctorate | 8 | R | Doctor of Letters<br>Doctor of Medicine<br>Doctor of Philosophy<br>Doctor of Science | DLitt<br>MD<br>PhD<br>DSc | | 24 mths | | | | | | |
| MS | 8 | R | Master of Surgery | MS | | | | | | | | |
| Professional Doctorate | 8 | R | Doctor of Business Administration<br>Doctor of Clinical Psychology<br>Doctor of Education<br>Doctor of Engineering<br>Doctor of Health<br>Doctor of Policy Research and Practice | DBA<br><br>DClinPsy<br><br>EdD<br>EngD<br>DHealth<br>DPRP | 5400 | 24 mths | **270** | | | | 52 | 216 |
| MPhil | 7 | R | Master of Philosophy | MPhil | | 12 mths | | | | | | |
| Taught Masters Degree | 7 | T | Master of Arts<br>Master of Business Administration<br>Master of Education<br>Master of Research<br>Master of Science | MA<br>MBA<br><br>MEd<br>MRes<br>MSc | 1800 | 12 mths | **90** | | | | 90 | |
| Postgraduate Diploma † | 7 | T | Postgraduate Diploma | PGDip | 1200 | 2 sems | **60** | | | | 60 | |
| Postgraduate Certificate | 7 | T | Postgraduate Certificate in Education | PGCE | 1200 | 2 sems | **60** | | | | 60 | |
| Postgraduate Certificate † | 7 | T | Postgraduate Certificate | PGCert | 600 | 1 sem | **30** | | | | 30 | |
| Undergraduate Masters Degree | 7 | T | Master of Architecture | MArch | 2400 | 2 years | **120** | | | | 120 | |
| Undergraduate Masters Degree (without sandwich year, or where placement/ study abroad replaces study at Bath in a 4-year course) *** | 7 | T | Master in Science<br>Master of Biochemistry<br>Master of Biology<br>Master of Biomedical Sciences<br>Master of Chemistry<br>Master of Computing<br>Master of Engineering<br>Master of Mathematics<br>Master of Pharmacology<br>Master of Pharmacy<br>Master of Physics | MSci<br>MBiochem<br>MBiol<br>MBioMed<br>MChem<br>MComp<br>MEng<br>MMath<br>MPharmacol<br>MPharm<br>MPhys | 4800 | 4 years | **240** | 60 | 50 | 50 | 60 | |
| Bachelors Degree with Honours (without sandwich year)*** | 6 | T | Bachelor of Arts<br><br>Bachelor of Engineering<br>Bachelor of Science | BA(Hons)<br><br>BEng(Hons)<br>BSc(Hons) | 3600 | 3 years | **180** | 60 | 50 | 50 | | |
| Graduate Diploma | 6 | T | Graduate Diploma | | 1200 | 2 sems | **60** | | | 50 | | |
| Graduate Certificate | 6 | T | Professional Graduate Certificate in Education | PGCE | 1200 | 2 sems | **60** | | | 60 | | |
| Graduate Certificate | 6 | T | Graduate Certificate | | 600 | 1 sem | **30** | | | 30 | | |
| Bachelors Degree without honours (Ordinary) | 6 | T | Bachelor of Engineering<br>Bachelor of Science | BEng<br>BSc | 3000 | 3 years | **150** | 60 | 50 ** | 30 | | |
| Foundation Degree | 5 | T | Foundation Degree in Arts<br>Foundation Degree in Science | FdA<br>FdSc | 2400 | 2 years | **120** | 60 | 60 | | | |
| Diploma of Higher Education | 5 | T | Diploma of Higher Education | DipHE | 2400 | 2 years | **120** | 60 | 50 ** | | | |
| Higher National Diploma | 5 | T | Higher National Diploma | HND | 2400 | 2 years | | | | | | |
| Higher National Certificate | 5 | T | Higher National Certificate | HNC | 2400 | 2 years | | | | | | |
| Certificate of Higher Education | 4 | T | Certificate of Higher Education | CertHE | 1200 | 2 sems | **60** | 60 ** | | | | |
| University Certificate | 4 | T | University Certificate | | 600 | 1 sem | **30** | 30 | | | | |
| Open Studies Certificate | 4 | T | Open Studies Certificate | | 300 | 1 sem | **15** | 15 | | | | |

\* T/R - Predominantly Taught or Research     \*\* excluding placement/study abroad     \*\*\* where applicable, additional sandwich year is 60 credits
† Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate exit awards: Specified units for a named award; any relevant non-placement/study abroad units for a generic award.

## ANNEX C – Curriculum Design Principles

**These nine key principles should guide the design of curricula for all courses:**

### 1.Inspire learners

Enthuse students for the subjects they choose to study and the broader aspects of university life. Demonstrate clearly the ways in which the University of Bath designs and facilitates their learning experience and their post-graduation experiences, such as through reflecting professional practice in what we teach.

### 2.Build on existing success

Promote the known benefits of the University community and its wider networks, including the impact of Bath research and the application of knowledge to real-world settings; employability through distinctive placement and other applied experiences; learning and developing in a World Heritage City and the South West region; and a well-articulated educational ethos.

### 3.Articulate a course-wide approach to learning

Design delivery and assessment from a coherent set of course-wide learning outcomes. Use viable, engaging and inspiring methods across the course's delivery and assessment to enable students to achieve those outcomes. Pay particular attention to the impact of design on transition into the first year of our undergraduate courses, and into postgraduate study.

### 4.Embrace assessment for learning

Recognise that assessment motivates and develops individual knowledge and skills as well as validating student achievement. Plan assessment strategically so that it supports the achievement of overall course goals and makes the most of the resources we have across the institution.

### 5.Support the diverse needs of learners

Design inclusive curricula so that all students can develop a sense of belonging, purpose and identity. Recognise the differing needs of students at all levels, particularly those who represent communities that may have been marginalised or historically underrepresented in the discipline. Promote student integration into the learning community through supportive approaches to content and assessment.

### 6.Engage with research

Create opportunities for students to engage actively with, and contribute to, research communities in the University. Build cultures of research and inquiry within the curriculum from the outset, so that students become genuine partners in the production of knowledge rather than being passive consumers.

### 7.Embed global citizenship and sustainability

Recognise the challenges presented by the changes to our broader physical and social environment. Consider how our curriculum might empower students for the roles they will play during their lives as global citizens. Develop mechanisms in the curricular and/or co-curricular realms to prepare them for these challenges.

### 8.Build on meaningful partnerships

Develop strategies that maximise the potential contributions of internal and external stakeholders, including those from industry and the professions. Work towards establishing students as full partners in the curriculum, co-creating approaches to delivery and assessment. Enable students to support their

peers in innovative and mutually beneficial ways. Listen actively to partner organisations and find ways to engage them in education, including the development of practice-focused pathways.

### 9.Embrace the opportunities for transformation

Make genuine and meaningful improvements to the way we work and facilitate learning. Take full advantage of the opportunities we have to be progressive and forward-looking for the benefit of both staff and students.

**The University seeks opportunities to make genuine and meaningful improvements to the way we work and facilitate learning. Taking advantage of the opportunities we have to be progressive and forward-looking for the benefit of both staff and students requires us to:**

### 10.Design towards staff and student wellbeing and work/life balance

Be aware of the intensity of assessment and its effects on our community. Adopt assessment-for-learning approaches that can enable us to be strategic about how, when, and why we assess students. Ensure that we use sufficient summative assessment to have confidence in the achievement of learning outcomes at various levels, and no more.

### 11.Create strong foundations for continuous improvement

Use curriculum transformation as the foundation for a course that is fit for the twenty-first century. Design with flexibility and adaptability to ensure that continuous improvement will be responsive to stakeholders and considered in the lifetime of the course.

### 12.Use University resources efficiently and effectively

Understand both the opportunities and constraints relating to learning and teaching, such as with space, and within the timetable. Think about how the course's use of space and modes of delivery can be effective for new generations of students.

### 13.Ensure there is space for broader learning activities

Build in the capacity for different learning activities and interactions. Find ways to utilise contributions from the Skills Centre, the Library, and other services as integrated parts of the course. Make the most of student and academic interaction.

### 14.Work creatively within flexible frameworks

Understand and work within the flexibilities that will be part of the new design and regulatory frameworks. Simplify course regulations for greater effectiveness. Tell a coherent and simple story about progression through the course that will be clearly understood by students.

### 15.Design a fresh approach to choice

Enable students to experience specialist areas while maintaining the overall coherence of a well-structured course and curriculum. Counter any over-assessment that may develop. Be creative about where choice may be most beneficial within the course assessment and/or study. Ensure choice early in the course does not limit later opportunities for student learning.

# ANNEX D – Assessment for Learning Design Principles

The principle of 'Embracing assessment for learning' was agreed by Senate as an underlying aim of Curriculum Transformation. It is important to recognise that assessment motivates and develops individual knowledge and skills as well as validating student achievement and is a key pathway to feedback. Planning, designing and implementing assessment and feedback strategically can ensure that it supports the achievement of unit and course learning outcomes whist also being a developmental and satisfying experience for students and staff.

The following principles for the design of assessment and feedback add further definition to this aim and are intended to assist course teams in developing assessment for their courses. They are fully aligned with the information provided in QA16 Assessment, Marking and Feedback, but also build on, and reinforce, other key curriculum principles such as 'Articulating a course-wide approach to learning' and 'Supporting the needs of all learners' which are vital for high quality, sustainable course design and delivery. Whilst the principles are provided as a guide for developing assessment strategies for transformed courses, they can equally be applied to the current version of courses to enhance assessment and feedback where required. The principles outlined below are relevant across all formats of provision, including online and blended modes. Examples are provided to illustrate each principle, but many useful additional resources are available on the CLT Hub or through discussion with Curriculum Development Officers.

| Assessment for Learning Design Principle | Example of this in practice and useful resources |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Assessment should be designed to promote student learning and not only as a summative evaluation tool. | Select assessment formats and content which are likely to be encountered by graduates in their future employment - by undertaking the assessment, the student is gaining useful experience. For example, a coursework assessment may be in a sector-specific format; a quiz may be in the style of a relevant employer's induction process; exam questions could be based on real- world case studies. |
| | The types of problems/tasks that are addressed in the assessment can be incorporated into learning activities so that the links between learning and assessment are very clear. |
| 2. Assessment should be designed to meet unit and course intended learning outcomes. | When designing assessment and feedback start by identifying the learning outcomes that you are aiming to assess. Within those learning outcomes look for the powerful verbs which provides cues about the activities we should ask students to undertake. The topic of question/task then supplies the object for the verb. Further details of this can be found in Sally Brown and Kay Sambell's Advance HE publication "Assessment and Feedback in a post-pandemic era" |
| | There should be clear identification of which unit and course learning outcomes are being assessed by a particular assessment. The inclusion of course level learning outcomes can help to demonstrate how assessment in one unit follows on to assessment in future units on the course. |

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| 3. | Assessment should be designed to develop and test skills and understanding and application of knowledge, rather than focusing on testing student's ability to recall knowledge itself. | One way this can be accomplished is by using authentic assessments which reflect what graduates will be doing in employment. Examples include: <br>• case studies <br>• giving students real experimental data, and asking them to analyse and interpret it or write an abstract <br>• ask students to write the patient notes for an individual suffering from X disease <br>• design experiments to prove X <br>• blogs <br>• podcasts <br>• write a business plan <br>• dragon's den style pitch <br><br> These types of tasks are particularly important in exams in the era of online assessments in which invigilation is not currently possible. |
| 4. | A course-wide approach to assessment should be taken to facilitate the students' journey through their course. <br><br> This should take into account both the types and distribution of assessments in a year of study and across the whole course to allow assessments to build on each other. <br><br> A course-wide strategy should also ensure appropriate spacing of assessments and protect against over-assessment of intended learning outcomes and excessive workload for students and staff. | A practical approach to this could be to: <br><br> 1. Start with the learning outcomes/skills that you need to assess and determine the diverse types of assessments which will best assess those. <br><br> 2. Distribute these types of assessments across all stages/years to facilitate development in the skills through the course. <br><br> 3. Whilst some repetition of assessment types is beneficial to development of skills, avoid excessive duplication of one assessment type. <br><br> 4. Then link the assessment types to specific units <br><br> This will create a map of assessments (both summative and formative) across a course to help to demonstrate the spread and total number of assessments. <br><br> It is worth noting here that formative assessments of a certain type can provide feedback for assessments of the same type in other units (see principle 10). |
| 5. | Subject Benchmark Statements and Professional Body accreditation requirements (if relevant) should inform the assessment strategy for a course. <br><br> There is normally considerable flexibility in how these can be used by course teams. | The nature of these requirements will be course specific, but will potentially mandate the inclusion of specific types of assessment. If this is the case these should form part of the mapping exercise described in Principle 4. |

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| 6. | There should be a diversity of assessment types in order to develop the skills required to achieve the course learning outcomes. | You should avoid using only one or two assessment types across a course. |
| | | This again relates to ensuring that assessments are authentic and preparing students for employment and the examples provided for Principles 1 and 3 apply. |
| | | Within each of these assessment types it should be clearly articulated which course and/or unit learning outcomes are being addressed and the support that will be available for developing those skills. |
| 7. | Assessment should be designed to be inclusive in order to cater for the diversity of our student population. The design should ensure that all students, including those with protected characteristics or other factors out of their control, are given the opportunity to meet the intended learning outcomes. | Utilising a broad range of assessment types (Principle 6) is beneficial for all learners. An essential element of this being successful for all students is to prepare and support them through the assessments. By enhancing assessment literacy you can empower those students who find an assessment type more challenging to accomplish the task and achieve the intended learning outcomes. |
| | | Inclusive assessment design can include flexibility in the means by which students are able to meet outcomes via assessment where appropriate, but it must still prepare students for employment and not avoid skills and learning outcomes considered essential for the course. |
| | | Assessments should be designed so that students are not disadvantaged in demonstrating their achievements by the type of assessment chosen. Considering the 3 Rs (Remove, Reduce and Rethink) will help you to address any barriers to assessment, whilst still maintaining rigorous assessment standards. There is guidance on possible barriers linked to assessment types on the CLT Hub. |
| | | For example, if you are intending to assess via presentations, check that this is actually required in order for the student to meet the learning outcomes. If not a requirement, then consider whether the specific method of assessment could be replaced with more flexible forms of assessment such as a poster, blog etc. (Remove) which still meet the intended learning outcomes. |
| | | If 'presenting' is a necessary feature of the assessment design linked to the learning outcomes, then consider whether the barrier this may present can be mitigated (Reduce). This might include building in choice in terms of how the students can present e.g. recording their presentation, presenting to a smaller group or presenting with peers etc. |
| | | If 'presenting' is a requirement and an essential form of assessment linked to learning outcomes or graduate attributes, then consider how students could be supported to overcome any barriers or challenges they may face (Rethink) e.g. can the students build up to the assessment point gradually, enabling them to practice and consolidate their skills? Could the students be supported to develop strategies to overcome any challenges they may face? A tool kit of strategies to support learners can be found on the CLT Hub. |

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| | Whilst it is likely that there will be some situations in which individual disability action plans require individual alternative assessments these should only be used when the principles explained above are not possible or appropriate. For example there are some students who find group work challenging, but it is more beneficial for the student to prepare and support them to develop the skills to work with a group than avoid it via an alternative assessment. |
| 8. The course assessment strategy should be designed to promote academic integrity as an essential element of progression through the course. | Assessments which require students to demonstrate their understanding and application of knowledge (see principle 3 above) will support this endeavour.<br><br>The use of viva voce or other oral assessments can help to reduce dishonest practices. |
| 9. Feedback is an integral element of assessment.<br><br>Students should receive feedback on their learning in a variety of ways, including from teaching staff, from peers, and through the development of independent learning skills.<br><br>Attention should be given to developing students' ability to identify, engage, and act upon feedback from different sources in order to support their learning and success in future summative assessments. | It should be very clear at the beginning of a unit how formative feedback will be provided. This should be included in the unit outline, on the unit's Moodle page and in the introductory lectures.<br>Ideally this should initiate a dialogue between students and staff about the feedback opportunities and how that feedback can be used for summative assessments.<br><br>The 'Understand, Engage, Act' Teaching Development Fund project focused on supporting an active student role in the feedback process, and shared expectations between students and staff about feedback. Resources and good practice/lessons learned are available on the CLT Hub and project staff are available to share knowledge.<br><br>The use of a Feedback ePortfolio to log feedback across a student's journey can help to identify skill development and areas for improvement and to locate resources. |

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| 10. At least one formal formative feedback opportunity, with timely and appropriate feedback from teaching staff, should be provided in relation to each summative assessment task or type to help students prepare. This may be in a different unit to the assessment currently being considered but in all cases the link between the formative exercise and summative assessments should be made clear to students. | The mapping of summative and formative assessments across a course can identify how formative opportunities in one unit can link to another.<br><br>Internal feedback (where students compare their current work / knowledge / competence against a reference) has been found to be more learning- focused that standard feedback from the lecturer. Sally Brown and Kay Sambell suggest a "Produce, Compare, Review" approach. This could be used really easily as a formative task. For example, set the students an essay from a past-paper.<br>Produce: students write their formative essay. Compare: in an interactive session, you provide a reference essay for them to compare their work. Review: students are encouraged to make the results of their comparison explicit.<br><br>This should be scaffolded by questions from the teacher (e.g. what is similar / different, positives and negatives...). Students can compare between themselves and should be encouraged to discuss learning points. This approach can also reduce staff time in marking formative work.<br><br>[Further details of this can be found in Sally Brown and Kay Sambell's Advance HE publication "Assessment and Feedback in a post-pandemic era"](#) |
| 11. Clear and timely communication about assessment and feedback is an essential element of a satisfying assessment experience.<br><br>Prior to undertaking any summative assessment task, students should be provided with clear information on (see also QA16 6.10 and 6.11): | Information about the course approach to assessment and feedback should be included in Programme Handbooks and/or Course Moodle pages. These could include course level marking criteria, descriptors of the types of assessments used, descriptors of the type of feedback provided and how this can be utilised. This information can be reiterated and signposted by Directors of Studies during induction and reinduction sessions and by Personal Tutors.<br><br>Within units, information about assessments, their marking criteria, feedback on assessments and other feedback opportunities should be made available to students via unit outlines and, where relevant, the assessment tab on Moodle pages.<br>These should also be communicated to students in introductory lectures or at the most appropriate time within a unit to establish a dialogue between staff and students about the assessment, the feedback opportunities and how these can be used. |
| a. The purpose of the assessment and why the particular form of assessment supports students to demonstrate that they have met the intended learning outcomes<br><br>b. The expectations on students, including marking criteria | Good practice (where possible) to also highlight links to future assessments/units and to graduate skills (e.g. "this format of technical document is commonly encountered in the X sector").<br>Assessment specific marking criteria can help to contextualise the course marking criteria to a specific assignment. This is beneficial to the students and provides transparency in how marks will be awarded. It will also streamline the marking of summative assessment by forming the basis of marking rubrics. |

| | | |
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| | | Example assessment type marking criteria will be provided for essays, presentations, posters etc to demonstrate this process and promote consistency where appropriate. |
| c. | The expectations of student conduct in regards to academic integrity and plagiarism, including any activity (e.g. collaboration) or use of resources that is specifically not permitted | This is particularly important for online assessments and group work. |
| d. | How previous feedback (within the unit or from a separate unit) can be used to improve their work | Produce, Compare, Review approach for formative tasks would really help with this as it provides internal feedback. As will the assessment mapping described in Principle 4. |
| e. | When they will receive formative and summative feedback | Please see guidance on feedback in Principle 10 and assessment mapping in Principle 4. |
| f. | How the feedback on any summative assessment can be used to improve their future work. | Please see guidance on feedback in Principle 10 and assessment mapping in Principle 4. |

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| Owner | Education Quality and Standards Committee |
| Version number | 1.0 |
| Approval date | 25 January 2022 |
| Approved by | Education Quality and Standards Committee |
| Date of last review | 25 January 2022 |

## ANNEX E – Assessment Taxonomy

Clear definition of assessment is vital for establishing a course level approach to assessment for learning as well as student understanding of assessment tasks and system integration and assessment administration. In November 2021 EQSC approved the principle of the development of a taxonomy which categorised assessments at the highest level into Examination, Coursework or Practical and then provided more detailed sub categories within each. This was heavily based on existing definitions used by the CLT with the addition of some extra classifications relating to changes in assessment formats which had arisen during the pandemic. Since then the taxonomy has been developed by the Assessment and Feedback Working Group and feedback from all Directors of Teaching has been sought to ensure it is fit for purpose and encompasses the many examples of innovative and authentic assessment that are used across the University. This taxonomy has evolved through this process and is now presented in such a way as to demonstrate the information which would be provided to different stakeholders, i.e. external information about assessment types and then assessment sub-type detail required for approvals processes, assessment administration and fully informing students on a course/unit.

### Using the Taxonomy

The Assessment sub-types below are deliberately generic as, if the Taxonomy were to include a sub-type for every potential description of an assessment it would become too cumbersome. However, the sub-types are not intended to stifle creativity in assessment design. Therefore, if your planned assessment is not clearly defined below, please seek advice on the most appropriate Assessment sub-type to use from Curriculum Development Officers. If your planned assessment falls between the defined sub-types (for example it includes elements of two different assessment sub-types) please place it in the sub-type that describes the most substantive part of the assessment. If your assessment includes two submissions with two separate marks that form part of the whole, these should be identified separately within the defined categories. In all cases further detail of the specific assessment can be provided for the approval process, and must be provided in the information provided to students about their assessment within a course/unit.

If there are proposed assessments which cannot fit into any of the Assessment sub-types defined below, EQSC will be asked to approve a new Assessment sub-type.

| Assessment Type (Summary) For publication to prospective | Assessment sub-type (Detail) For approval purposes and for internal publication to staff and students | Operational considerations For assessment administration | Definition Including important information for students |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Examination An assessment at the end of a period of learning (not necessarily the end of a unit) carried out under timed conditions.** | Closed-book written examination • duration to be specified | • Takes place within the university examination period and is scheduled by the exams office • Environment (online through Inspera or in person) should be specified • **Invigilation required** • No extensions allowable • Mitigation by IMCs and/or supplementary assessment period • Individual feedback not required | A written assessment occurring during the University's official examination period. Students are expected to answer a question or set of questions relating to a particular area of study under timed conditions and **without reference materials**. Closed-book examinations may be "seen" where the student is aware in advance of the question(s) they are expected to answer, or "unseen", where the questions are only revealed on the day. Students should also be provided with information relating to the type of questions that will be included in the exam (MCQ, short answer, essay) |
| | Open-book written examination • duration to be specified | • Takes place within the university examination period and is scheduled by the exams office • Environment (online through Inspera or in person) should be specified • **Invigilation not required** • No extensions allowable | A written assessment occurring during the University's official examination period. Students are expected to answer a question or set of questions relating to a particular area of study under timed conditions and **with access to reference materials**. Open-book examinations may be "seen" where the student is aware in advance of the question(s) they are expected to answer, or "unseen", where the questions are only revealed on the day. Open book examinations can be invigilated or not. |

| | | • Mitigation by IMCs and/or supplementary assessment period<br>• Individual feedback not required | Students should also be provided with information relating to the type of questions that will be included in the exam (MCQ, short answer, essay) and the reference materials that can be used. |
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| | In-class test<br>• duration to be specified | • **Takes place outside the university examination period and is scheduled by Departments**<br>• Environment (online through Inspera or Moodle in person) should be specified<br>• Closed book or open book to be specified<br>• Invigilation dependent on open or closed book<br>• No extensions allowable<br>• Mitigation by IMCs or like for like assessment<br>• **Individual feedback may be provided** | A timed test taken outside the University's assessment period, in a normal classroom or online, during a timetabled session.<br>Conditions may be similar to those of a formal examination and this is why it is proposed that this assessment method be classified as Examination rather than Coursework.<br>In-class tests may be seen or unseen, and open- or closed-book. This information should be provided to the students along with the type of questions and reference materials that can be used (if appropriate).<br>Individual feedback is normally provided for in class tests. |

| Coursework Written, oral or design work on a particular topic that is undertaken during the course and has a deadline attached to it. | Essay <br> • Max word or page count, or range to be specified | • Mitigation normally by extension <br> • Individual feedback required | A written exercise on a particular topic which includes description, analysis, interpretation or critical thinking. It is usually shorter than a dissertation. |
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| | Report <br> • Max word or page count, or range to be specified <br> • Individual or group assessment to be specified | • Mitigation normally by extension <br> • Individual/group feedback required | A description, summary or other account of an experience or activity or investigation. There are many different kinds of report - often students are required to produce a report after participating in a practical activity such as fieldwork, laboratory work, work experience or placement. <br> Reports typically have a prescribed format. |
| | Visual or recorded presentation <br> • Individual or group assessment to be specified | • Mitigation normally by extension <br> • Individual/group feedback required | The visual or recorded presentation of work on a particular topic which does not use a traditional written form. There are many different formats that could be used including posters, infographics, webpages, blogs, podcasts, vlogs, narrated presentations and short films and assessments of this nature can be very authentic. <br> It is essential that clear information on the expected format is provided to students. |
| | Dissertation <br> • Max word or page count, or range to be specified | • Mitigation normally by extension | An extended piece of written work, often the writeup of a final-year UG or taught Masters research project. <br> A dissertation is a substantial piece of writing deriving from research that a student has undertaken. Dissertations are the result of a student's independent work (although the research could have been undertaken as part of a group), carried out under the guidance of a supervisor. Different subject disciplines may follow different conventions in relation to the production of dissertations. |

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| | Portfolio<br>• Max word or page count, or range to be specified where appropriate | • Mitigation normally by extension<br>• Individual feedback required | A collection of work that relates to a given topic or theme, which has been produced over a period of time, and is usually associated with work-based or experiential learning.<br>A portfolio can contains a number of pieces of work, usually connected by a topic or theme. Students are usually required to organise the collection of examples and the portfolio often includes some reflective accounts. |
| | Oral presentation<br>• Individual or group assessment to be specified | • Mitigation normally by extension<br>• Individual/group feedback required | An oral presentation on a given topic which could be followed by a questions and answer session.<br>The timing and format of the presentation should be specified. |
| | Oral assessment | • Mitigation normally by extension<br>• Individual feedback required | A conversation on a given topic, including an individual contribution to a seminar.<br>Examples of oral assessments might include conversations, case discussions, role play, debates and individual contributions to seminars. |
| | Viva Voce | • Mitigation normally by extension<br>• Individual feedback required | An individual question and answer session which may also include an oral presentation.<br>Is normally associated with the assessment of a dissertation or project, but can also be utilised for practical, clinical or other applied assessments or in a holistic way to establish attainment of course learning outcomes. |
| | Project output (other than dissertation or report)<br>• Individual or group assessment to be specified | • Mitigation normally by extension<br>• Individual/group feedback required | Output from project work, often of a practical nature, other than a dissertation or written report.<br>Students are assessed on the output of a period of project work (other than in the form of a dissertation or written report). Examples are diverse and may include a new product, model, or a poster. |

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| | Set exercises<br>• Individual or group assessment to be specified | • Mitigation normally by extension<br>• Individual/group feedback required | Questions or tasks designed to assess the application of knowledge, analytical, problem solving, or evaluative skills. Examples might include data interpretation, data-analysis exercises, and problem-based or problem-solving exercises |
| | Reflective Assessment<br>• Max word or page count, or range to be specified | • Mitigation normally by extension<br>• Individual feedback required | Any reflective assessment that focuses on critical analysis of the learning, and/or development that has taken place over a period of time, or following a specified event.<br>Typical examples may include learning journals and/or diaries, blogs, audio/video reflections, personal development planning, placement or work-based learning synthesis, reflective essays. |
| **Practical** | Practical | • Mitigation normally by extension<br>• Individual feedback required | Assessment of a student's practical skills or competence. A practical skills assessment focuses on whether, and/or how well, a student performs a specific practical skill or technique (or competency).<br>Examples include clinical skills (including OSCEs), laboratory techniques, record keeping and analysis, identification of or commentary on sketches, surveying skills, or listening comprehension.<br>This might also include a placement supervisor's assessment of a student's competence. |

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| Date of last review | 25 January 2022 |

# ANNEX H – Individual Schemes of Study

**See [Annex H – Individual Schemes of Study](#)**

## ANNEX I – New Degree Apprenticeship Courses

**See Annex I [TO FOLLOW]**

## ANNEX J – Placements in Course Design

**See Annex J [TO FOLLOW]**