

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

Document Administration

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

1. The Credit Framework

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

2. Programmes

- 2.1. The University will make every effort to ensure that the published programme (course) details are complete and up-to-date. However, the University will be entitled to make reasonable changes to the programme (including to the content and syllabus of the course, or the location of the course or the method of delivery or assessment of the course) where this will enable the University to deliver a better quality of educational experience to students enrolled on the course. In making such changes, the University will aim to keep the changes to the minimum necessary to achieve the required quality of experience and will notify and consult with affected students/ applicants as appropriate.
- 2.2. In the exceptional situation of a programme being closed, students will be notified in a timely manner and appropriate support provided for them to successfully complete their studies. This is in accordance with the University's Student Protection Plan¹. Monitoring of students' progress will be the responsibility of the Portfolio Management Group (PMG); where the PMG has identified at risk students, additional support, monitoring and review will be put in place.
- 2.3. Programmes of study are constructed to enable students to progress through the credit levels and, on achievement of the learning outcomes and credit requirements associated with each stage of study, to qualify for a University award. The relationship between credits, levels and the award are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1:

Award		Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Total Credit Value
POSTGRADUATE	Doctor of Philosophy						Not credit rated	
	Doctor of Education					60	480*	540
	Taught Master Degree				30 or 0	150 or 180		180
	Integrated Master Degree		120	120	120	120		480

¹ [OfS 2018.04 Annex D: Template for a student protection plan \(bishopg.ac.uk\)](https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/OfS201804AnnexDTemplateforastudentprotectionplan)

Award		Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8	Total Credit Value
	Postgraduate Diploma					120		120
	Postgraduate Certificate (including Postgraduate Certificate in Education)					60		60
UNDERGRADUATE	Bachelor Degree with Honours		120	120	120			360
	Professional Graduate Certificate in Education				30 or 60	30 or 0		60
UNDERGRADUATE	Bachelor Degree Ordinary (Exit Award only)		120	120	60			300
	Graduate Diploma				120			
	Graduate Certificate				60			
	Foundation Degree		120	120				240
	Diploma of Higher Education**		120	120				240
	Certificate of Higher Education***		120					120
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND SKILLS	Professional Graduate Diploma in Education, Training and Skills****				120			120
	Certificate Education, Training and Skills ****			120				120
MINOR AWARDS	Advanced Certificate				60			60
	Intermediate Certificate			60				60
	Introductory Certificate		60					60
	Credit Achievement Award	Minimum of 15 credits at any level						

- * Students registered on the 2009 validated EdD programme undertook five level 8 modules and a thesis at level 8 = 540 credits. All students following the 2015 validated programme; they will undertake two modules at level 7 (60 credits); three modules at level 8 (120 credits) and a thesis at level 8 (360 credits).
 - ** If there are insufficient level 5 credits but the student has achieved credits at level 6 to replace the missing level 5 credits, these may be counted for the purposes of calculating an exit award without classification.
 - *** If there are insufficient level 4 credits but the student has achieved credits at level 5 to replace the missing level 4 credits, these may be counted for the purposes of calculating an exit award without classification 5.
 - **** These qualifications link to the Education and Training Foundation Framework.
- 2.4. **Minor awards** enhance the portfolio of awards and may provide realistic initial objectives for those beginning or returning to study in higher education. Minor awards may be taken as target awards or as stepping-stones to intermediate or further undergraduate or postgraduate awards.
- A student who successfully completes a minor award may subsequently register for another BGU award and use the credits towards the credit requirements for that award if they are deemed appropriate and current in accordance with the University's Code of Practice for the Recognition of Prior Learning.
- 2.5. **Foundation degree** programmes are designed to progress from level 4 to level 5 accruing 120 credits at each level to a minimum of 240 credits and must comprise a major work-based element. In line with the Foundation Degree Characteristic Statement from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA): "Clear routes that facilitate opportunities for successful progression from foundation degrees towards another qualification are a feature of foundation degrees. Such routes are established when foundation degrees are approved, and identify the link(s) between the foundation degree and other qualification(s)"². Foundation degree programmes are discrete awards that on completion may permit entry into level 6 of a Bachelor degree programme or a level 6 top-up Bachelor degree. A Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) may be awarded as an exit award on achievement of the appropriate (120) credit requirements. (See Appendix A for further details on the Foundation Degree credit framework.)
- 2.6. **Bachelor Degree with Honours** programmes are designed to progress from level 4 through to level 6 accruing 120 credits at each level to a minimum total of 360 credits. Exit awards may, at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, be given at either of the two step-off points i.e. completion of level 4 (CertHE, 120 credits at level 4) or completion of level 4 and 5 (Diploma of Higher Education – DipHE, 120 credits at level 4 and 120 credits at level 5). The normal minimum amount of credit required for each named subject in joint honours is illustrated in the table below. Where a PSRB requires a specific content framework to be embedded throughout the programme, the enhancement modules will not be used. The module structure will comply with the 15/ 30 module credit structure and a capstone specialist project will be included at level 6. The term capstone project is used in this document as an umbrella-term to include final year investigative projects such as dissertation, workplace project, final year project, research project etc. The nature of the project (and its appropriate descriptor – e.g. dissertation) will be outlined in the validation documents.
- 2.7. **Bachelor Degree with Honours** may be validated to include an initial non-credit bearing foundation year. The Foundation Year will be based on level 4 learning outcomes. (See Appendix B for further details on the Bachelor Degree framework.)

² [foundation-degree-characteristics-statement-2020.pdf](#)

Table 2

Single Hons	Subject Specific Core Modules		Subject Enhancement / Graduate Attribute Enhancement Modules	
	15/30 credit core Modules	Capstone Project core Module*	Subject Enhancement Modules	Graduate Attribute Enhancement Modules
L4	120	N/A	N/A	NA
L5	90	N/A	15 credit or 30 credits	15 credit or 0 credit
L6	45	45 credits or 2 linked 15 credit and 30 credit modules	30 credits	0 credits

*The modules contributing to the capstone project may vary if required by a PSRB or apprenticeship awarding body; however, it is anticipated that there would normally be a single 45 credit module or two or more linked modules consisting of multiples of 30 and 15 credits.

- 2.8. **Joint Bachelor Degree with Honours** programmes must conform to the general credit requirements for undergraduate study. Level 4 module credits are generally evenly distributed between both subjects. The title of the final award is determined at the programme validation event.

The normal minimum amount of credit required for each named subject in joint honours is illustrated in the table below.

Table 3

Joint Hons	Subject Specific Core Modules			Subject Enhancement / Graduate Attribute Enhancement Modules	
	Subject A: 15/30 Credit Modules	Subject B : 15/30 Credit Modules	Capstone Project	Subject Enhancement Modules	Graduate Attribute Enhancement Modules
L4	60	60	N/A	0	
L5	45-60	45-60	N/A	30 credits Or 15 credits	0 credits Or 15 credits
L6	30	30	45 credits or two linked 15 credit and 30 credit modules	15 (subject specific)	0 credits

Joint Programmes will be validated to ensure that a minimum of 45% of subject specific core credits is assigned to either subject in levels 5 and 6.



- 2.9. **Bachelors Degree (Ordinary)** programmes are not a standard offer and are only conferred in cases where a student has failed to achieve a minimum of 360 credits required for a Bachelor degree with honours but has achieved a minimum of 300 credits overall, with at least 60 credits achieved at level 6.
- 2.10. **Integrated Master Degree** programmes at BGU combine study at the level of a bachelor's degree with honours with study at master's level during the latter stages of the course. Programmes are designed to meet the qualification descriptors in full at level 6 and level 7, accruing 120 credits at levels 4, 5 and 6 and 120 credits at level 7³.
- 2.11. **Master Degree** programmes are designed to provide 180 credits (a minimum of 150 shall be at level 7 and a maximum of 30 credits may be at level 6). Three postgraduate stages are recognised; Post Graduate Certificate (PG Cert, 60 credits); Post Graduate Diploma (PG Dip 120 credits) and finally the award of Masters degree with a minimum of 180 credits.
- 2.12. The **Doctorate in Education** programme is designed to provide a total of 540 credits (with a minimum of 450 credits at level 8). The programme conforms to the regulations and requirements of the University of Leicester which is the awarding body for this validated programme (<http://www2.le.ac.uk/>).

3. Modules

- 3.1. Each module will specify a level that indicates the intellectual demand and rigour of academic study required to successfully complete the module at each stage of study. The level correlates with the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and the National Qualification Framework (NQF).
- 3.2. The FHEQ guidance⁴ in relation to credit level descriptors may be used as a template against which modules and their defined learning outcomes can be considered.

4. Apprenticeships in Higher Education

- 4.1. The design, structure and delivery of apprenticeships will comply with the QAA's Characteristics Statement Higher Education in Apprenticeships (July 2019)⁵. In accordance with this Statement, the design of the relevant programmes will begin with the relevant Apprenticeship Standard or Apprenticeship Framework and take into account QAA's Quality Code and Qualifications Frameworks, PSRB requirements and any other relevant information. The validation process for these programmes will demonstrate that they are an appropriate preparation for apprentices to develop the associated knowledge, skills and behaviours specified in Apprenticeship Standards or Frameworks and any other stakeholder requirements. The terminology for Higher Education in Apprenticeship is given in Appendix 1 of the 2019 QAA Characteristics Statement.

³ [Characteristics Statement: Master's Degree \(qaa.ac.uk\)](http://qaa.ac.uk)

⁴ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

⁵ [Characteristics Statement Apprenticeships \(qaa.ac.uk\)](http://qaa.ac.uk)

Appendix A – Module Framework for Foundation Degrees

A. Module Credit Sizes

A.1. Modules normally will be fifteen or thirty credits.

B. Programme Structures

B.1. The following programme structures will apply:

B.1.1. Foundation Degree programmes

Level 4 (not Foundation Year)

- All modules are subject specific and link to the subject learning outcomes for the degree concerned.
- The level consists of 120 credits, which can be made up of multiples of between four 30 credit modules and eight 15 credit modules.
- 30 credit modules may straddle semesters, for example:

Level 4	Semester 1	30	30		15
	Semester 2		30		15

Level 5

- The level consists of 120 credits, which are studied in modules consisting of a mix of 15 and 30 credits.
- All the modules are core and the specific learning outcomes are delivered in modules totalling 120 credits.
- At level 5 students are expected to conduct a research informed investigative project and this has to be within a 30 credit module.
- 30 credit modules can be configured either wholly within each semester or straddling both semesters, for example:

Level 5	Semester 1	30	15	15	30
	Semester 2		30		

Appendix B – Module Framework for Undergraduate Degrees including BA (Hons) Top Up programmes

A. Module Credit Sizes

A.1. Modules will be fifteen or thirty credits, with the exception of a capstone project at level 6. The capstone project will total 45 credits but may be made up of one 45 credit module or two linked 15 and 30 credit modules (totalling 45 credits)⁶

B. Programme Structures

B.1. The following programme structures will apply:

B.1.1. Bachelor Degree Top-up programmes

Level 4 & Level 5

- 240 credits achieved through a recognised entrance qualification (as defined in the validation documentation and programme specification) or agreed Recognition of Prior Learning process.

Level 6

- The level consists of 120 credits, which are studied in modules consisting of a mix of 15 and 30 credits.
- All the modules are core and the specific learning outcomes are delivered in modules totalling 120 credits.
- Each programme has a capstone project composed of a 45 credit module or two linked 30 credit and 15 credit modules (totalling 45 credits). The credits are end loaded in semester 2, to enable the relevant planning, skills development and research to occur in semester 1.
- Where a PSRB requires a specific content framework to be embedded throughout the programme, the enhancement modules will not be used. The module structure will comply with the 15/ 30 module credit structure and a capstone specialist project will be included at level 6. The modules contributing to the capstone project may vary if required by a PSRB or apprenticeship awarding body; however, it is anticipated that there would normally be a single 45 credit module or two or more linked modules consisting of multiples of 30 and 15 credits.
- 30 credit modules can be configured either wholly within each semester or straddling both semesters, for example:

Level 6	Semester 1	30	Capstone Project 15	15	30
	Semester 2		Capstone Project 30		

⁶ Integrated apprenticeships may vary from this structure however, are subject to programme viability approval.

Appendix C – Module Framework for Bachelor Degrees

A. Module Credit Sizes

A.1. Modules will be fifteen or thirty credits, with the exception of a capstone project at level 6. The capstone project will total 45 credits but may be made up of one 45 credit module or two linked 15 and 30 credit modules (totalling 45 credits)⁷.

B. Programme Structures

B.1. The following programme structures will apply:

B.1.1. Single honours programmes

Level 4 (not Foundation Year)

- All modules are subject specific and link to the subject learning outcomes for the degree concerned.
- The level consists of 120 credits, which can be made up of multiples of between four 30 credit modules and eight 15 credit modules.
- 30 credit modules may straddle semesters, for example:

Level 4	Semester 1	30	30	15
	Semester 2		30	15

Level 5

- The level consists of 120 credits, which are studied in modules consisting of four 15 credit modules and a mix of modules leading to either 15 or 30 credits.
- The core subject specific learning outcomes are normally delivered in modules totalling 90 credits.
- Where a PSRB requires a specific content framework to be embedded throughout the programme, the enhancement modules will not be used. The module structure will comply with the 15/ 30 module credit structure.
- The remaining 30 credits (15 credits per semester) involve modules that are either subject specific or linked to graduate outcomes. Where optional modules are offered, students are able to choose from a range of modules available to their programme area.
- Up to two 30 credit modules can be configured either wholly within each semester or straddling both semesters, for example:

⁷ Integrated apprenticeships may vary from this structure however, are subject to programme viability approval.

Level 5	Semester 1	30	30		Subject or Graduate attribute enhancement module 15
	Semester 2		15	15	Subject or Graduate attribute enhancement module 15

- A programme may be validated to include a study abroad option at a partner university. This normally takes the place of 60 credits contained wholly within semester 1 or 2 at Level 5.

Level 6

- The core subject specific learning outcomes are normally delivered in modules totalling 90 credits.
- The remaining 30 credits (15 credits per semester) involve modules that are subject specific option modules or modules linked to other synergistic subjects.
- Each programme has a capstone project at level 6. The capstone project will total 45 credits but may be made up of one 45 credit module or two linked 15 and 30 credit modules (totalling 45 credits)⁸. The credits are end loaded in semester 2, to enable the relevant planning, skills development and research to occur in semester 1.
- Where a PSRB requires a specific content framework to be embedded throughout the programme, the enhancement modules will not be used. The module structure will comply with the 15/ 30 module credit structure and a capstone specialist project will be included.
- Where an apprenticeship framework requires specific modules to be identified for end point assessment that does not fit the model outlined, these should normally be dealt or by linking of modules.
- 30 credits can be used either wholly with each semester or straddling both semesters for example:

Level 6	Semester 1	30	Capstone 15	15	Subject Enhancement Module 15
	Semester 2		Capstone 30		Subject Enhancement Module 15

Joint honours programmes

Level 4 (not Foundation Year)

- Each half subject has 60 credits allotted evenly across each semester.
- Each subject can utilise any combination of 15 or 30 credit modules.
- 30 credit modules may straddle semesters, for example:

Level 4	Semester 1	Subject A 30	Subject A 15	Subject B 30	
	Semester 2		Subject A 15	Subject B 15	Subject B 15

⁸ Integrated apprenticeships may vary from this structure however, are subject to programme viability approval.

Level 5

- The level consists of 120 credits, which are studied in modules consisting of at least four 15 credit modules and up to two 30 credits modules.
- The core learning for each subject is delivered in 45 credits of modules in each subject area.
- The remaining 30 credits in semester 2 involve modules that are either subject specific or linked to graduate outcomes. Where optional modules are offered, students are able to either choose one 15 credit graduate attribute option module in place of either the subject A or B optional module.
- Where a PSRB requires modules totalling 60 credits to be in a specific subject area, this will be taken into account at validation stage and may limit the optionality offered (e.g. Psychology).
- 30 credits can be used either wholly within each semester or straddling both semesters, for example:

Level 5	Semester 1	Subject A 30	Subject A 15	Subject B 30	
	Semester 2		Subject A or Graduate Enhancement module 15	Subject B 15	Subject B or Graduate Attribute Enhancement module 15

- A programme may be validated to include a study abroad option at a partner university. This normally takes the place of 60 credits contained wholly within semester 1 or 2 at Level 5.

Level 6

- Students study at least 45 from each half subject.
- The core learning outcomes for the programme are delivered through a capstone project alongside 30 core credits per subject.
- The credits for each subject area are (normally) evenly aligned over both semesters.
- Each programme has a capstone project at level 6. The capstone project will total 45 credits but may be made up of one 45 credit module or two linked 15 and 30 credit modules (totalling 45 credits)⁹. The credits are end loaded in semester 2, to enable the relevant planning, skills development and research to occur in semester 1.
- The capstone project can be in either subject A or B or combined across both subject areas unless prohibited by accreditation linked to a PSRB. This will be highlighted in the programme validation documents.
- Where a capstone project is drawn from a single subject area (e.g. subject A), the semester 1 option module is drawn from the second subject area (e.g. subject B) to ensure a minimum of 45 credits in both subject areas.

Level 6	Semester 1	Subject A 15	Subject B 30	Subject A or B Capstone Project 15	Subject A or B Enhancement Module 15
	Semester 2	Subject A 15		Subject A or B Capstone project 30	

⁹ Integrated apprenticeships may vary from this structure however, are subject to programme viability approval.