

B Credit Framework for all Taught Programmes

B1 Principles

- B1.1 Students receive academic credit in respect of their learning achievements as expressed in terms of learning outcomes.
- B1.2 A credit value, specified in terms of the number of credits and the level, is ascribed to each module.
- B1.3 Academic credit given in respect of successful fulfilment of the requirements of a module can be awarded only once and cannot be double-counted.
- B1.4 Every programme of study has set aims and outcomes that provide an overall focus for its component modules, and conforms to the regulatory framework for the design, delivery and assessment of any broader scheme that it may be a part of.
- B1.5 All taught programmes leading to University of Derby awards conform to the credit framework, with the exception of certain externally-validated collaborative programmes.

B2 The Credit Framework

- B2.1 The basic unit of credit relates to 10 hours of notional learning time; a standard module worth 20 credits represents 200 hours notional learning time.
- B2.2 A standard academic year for a full-time undergraduate honours degree student equates to 120 credits (1200 notional hours) and for a full-time postgraduate student equates to 180 credits (1800 notional hours).
- B2.3 The credits accrued as part of a programme may not be accredited towards any other award, unless they are part of an approved dual award with another degree awarding body, or the total exceeds the minimum requirement (e.g. 360 credits for an undergraduate degree, 180 credits for a postgraduate degree).

B3 Modules

B3.1 All modules are credit rated and, in the interests of transferability, standard sizes have been developed as follows:

| Module Size | Notional Learning Time | HE Credits | ECTS ¹ Credits |
|--|------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 6 x standard | 1200 hours | 120 credits | 60 credits |
| 5 x standard | 1000 hours | 100 credits | 50 credits |
| 4 x standard | 800 hours | 80 credits | 40 credits |
| 3 x standard | 600 hours | 60 credits | 30 credits |
| 2 x standard | 400 hours | 40 credits | 20 credits |
| 1 x standard | 200 hours | 20 credits | 10 credits |
| ¹ ECTS – European Credit Accumulation and Transfer System | | | |

The University of Derby recognises however that other module sizes may be required for the effective delivery of learning under some specific circumstances.

A rationale must be provided to the Chairs of Academic Development Quality Committee and Regulatory Framework Committee for approval of non-standard modules.

A register of programmes with non-standard module sizes will be kept and reviewed by Regulatory Framework Committee.

B3.2 Each module will specify a level that indicates the intellectual demand and rigour of academic study required to successfully complete the module. Levels are conceived successional, with increasing demands being placed upon learners as they undertake learning at higher levels.

The University has adopted generic Credit Level Descriptors that are designed as guidance, to be used in the form of a template against which modules and their defined learning outcomes can be considered. Learning accredited at each level will reflect the ability to:

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|--|--|
| <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">FURTHER EDUCATION</p> | <p>Entry Level</p> <p>Employ, recall and demonstrate elementary comprehension in a narrow range of areas, exercise basic skills within highly structured contexts and carry out directed activity under close supervision</p> <p>Level 1</p> <p>Employ a narrow range of applied knowledge, skills and basic comprehension within a limited range of predictable and structured contexts, including working with others under direct supervision but within a very limited degree of discretion and judgement about possible action.</p> <p>Level 2</p> <p>Apply knowledge with underpinning comprehension in a number of areas and employ a range of skills within a number of contexts, some of which may be non-routine; undertake directed activities with a degree of autonomy within time constraints.</p> <p>Level 3</p> <p>Apply knowledge and skills in a range of complex activities demonstrating comprehension of relevant theories; access and analyse information independently and make reasoned judgements, selecting from a considerable choice of procedures in familiar and unfamiliar contexts; directly own activities with some responsibility for the output of others.</p> |
| <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">HIGHER EDUCATION</p> | <p>Level 4</p> <p>Develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base; employ a range of specialised skills; evaluate information using it to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to a variety of unpredictable problems; operate in a range of varied and specific contexts taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs.</p> <p>Level 5</p> <p>Generate ideas through the analysis of concepts at an abstract level with a command of specialised skills and the formulation of responses to well defined and abstract problems; analyse and evaluate information; exercise significant judgement across a broad range of functions; accept responsibility for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.</p> <p>Level 6</p> <p>Critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge utilising specialised skills across an area of study; critically evaluate new concepts and evidence from a range of sources; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills and exercise significant judgement in a range of situations; accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes</p> <p>Level 7</p> <p>Display mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, employing advanced skills to conduct research or advanced technical and specialised activity; accept accountability for related decision making including use of supervision; demonstrate a deep understanding of the subject through independent modes of learning.</p> <p>Level 8</p> <p>Make a significant and original contribution to a specialised field of enquiry demonstrating command of methodological issues and engaging in critical dialogue with peers; accept full accountability for outcomes.</p> |

B3.3 Modules are specified in accordance with the following definitions:

| Module Type | Description |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Core module | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Used for Specialist programmes; not applicable to Joint Honours ▪ Designed to serve as a <i>fundamental</i> role in the delivery of the programme ▪ Achievement of all credits attached to core modules is essential for conferment of the award |
| Prescribed module | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Used with Specialist and Joint Honours programmes ▪ Develops a <i>significant</i> area of the curriculum ▪ Students are required to take all prescribed modules but failure to achieve the credits does not, in itself, prevent students from qualifying for an award |
| Optional module | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any module, other than a core or prescribed module, which will broaden your study, and/or help to acquire additional skills or knowledge. ▪ Note that a particular module may be an optional module for one programme but a core or prescribed module for another. |
| Pre-requisite module | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides specific preparation for another named module ▪ All students are expected to take pre-requisite modules in the designated order |
| Mandatory Pre-requisite module | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops an understanding, skill or competence that is indispensable to the study of another named module ▪ Students must have achieved the learning outcomes of a mandatory pre-requisite module before being allowed to continue to the module that depends on it for preparation |
| Co-requisite module | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Must be taken together, normally in the same stage of the programme ▪ The reasons for designating modules as co-requisite may be either academic or logistical |

B3.4 Modules do not have intrinsic status as defined by the above types. They are designated as *core* or *prescribed* for example, in relation to a specific programme, so the same module may appear as core on one programme and optional in another.

B3.5 The Programme Validation process should consider the restrictions placed on students by designating modules as *mandatory pre-requisites*, and if possible allow for greater flexibility for individual circumstances.

B4 Programmes

B4.1 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.

B4.2 **Stage** indicates sub-division of a programme into major steps of progression; each of the three years of a standard full-time degree programme, for example, is a stage. Depending on the mode of study, a stage may be delivered in less or more than a single academic year e.g. accelerated degrees, part-time. Each stage provides a coherent learning experience and may be certified with an interim award. Normally all the module credits within a stage will be at the same level, but modules at different levels may appear in the same stage.

B4.3 In terms of programme design, the relationship between stages, final level, credits and the award is shown in the table below.

B4.4 The minimum levels of achievement for an award to be conferred are as specified in Section F9 (undergraduate) and Section G10 (postgraduate).

| Sector | Award | Stage | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 | Level 8 |
|------------------------------|--|-------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------|------------------|---------|
| Postgraduate | Professional Doctorates or Practice Based Doctorates | | | | | | 120 | 420 |
| | Master of Professional Practice | | | | | | 180 | |
| | Taught Master's | | | | | | 180 | |
| | Integrated Master's | | | 120 | 120 | 60 ⁵ | 120 ⁵ | |
| | Master's Advanced Diploma ¹ | | | | | | 60 | |
| | Postgraduate Diploma | | | | | | 120 | |
| | Postgraduate Certificate ² | | | | | (20) | 60 | |
| See foot notes in next table | | | | | | | | |

| Sector | Award | Stage | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 | Level 8 | |
|---------------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------|---------|--|
| Undergraduate | Bachelor's Degree with Honours | 3 | 120 ^{3,6} | 120 ³ | 120 ³ | 120 ³ | | | |
| | Bachelor's Degree | | 120 ^{3,6} | 120 ³ | 120 ³ | 60 | | | |
| | Advanced Diploma | | | 120 | 120 | 60 | | | |
| | Bachelor's Advanced Diploma ¹ | | | | | 60 | | | |
| | Professional Graduate Certificate | | | 40 | 40 | 40 | | | |
| | Foundation Degree | 2 | | 120 ³ | 120 ³ | | | | |
| | Certificate in Education | | | 40 | 80 | | | | |
| | Diploma of Higher Education | | | 120 ³ | 120 ³ | | | | |
| | Certificate of Higher Education | 1 | | 120 ³ | | | | | |
| BTEC | Higher National Diploma | No stage awards | | 120 ³ | 120 ³ | | | | |
| | Higher National Certificate | | | 120 ³ | | | | | |
| Minor Awards | University Advanced Diploma | | | | | | 60 | | |
| | University Diploma | | | | 60 | | | | |
| | University Certificate | | | 60 | | | | | |
| | Foundation Certificate | | 60 | | | | | | |
| | Diploma in Policing | | 60 | | | | | | |
| | Certificate of Continuing Education ⁴ | | Minimum of 30 credits at any level | | | | | | |
| | Certificate of Continuing Professional Development ⁴ | Minimum of 30 credits at any level | | | | | | | |
| | Certificate of Credit | Minimum of 10 credits at any level | | | | | | | |

¹ When taken as a separate stage 3 programme of study following completion of a full undergraduate or postgraduate award at the same level

² 20 credits at level 6 may be used to make the full 60 credit requirement at Postgraduate Certificate level

³ Failure in modules to the value of 20 credits per level may be compensated where a mark of 35-39% has been attained, and an overall average mark of 40% for the level has been achieved (F7.4)

⁴ In some circumstances these awards may be validated with a professionally recognised title, such as Practice Certificate

⁵ Credits must equate to 240 across level 6 & 7 – see example below and also B4.11

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Level 4 - 120 | Level 5 - 120 | Level 6 - 80 | Level 7 - 160 |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|

⁶ Applicable only where the Bachelor's degree is a 4 year programme – i.e. Bachelors subject with foundation

B4.5 Minor awards augment the portfolio of intermediate and major awards and provide realistic first objectives for those beginning or returning to learning at HE level. The awards may be taken as target awards or they may be regarded as stepping-stones to intermediate or major awards.

The minor awards are not intermediate stages of the University's major awards. Consequently, a student who fails to satisfy the requirements for an intermediate or major award cannot be recommended for one of the University's minor awards.

However, a student who satisfactorily completes a minor award may subsequently register for an intermediate or major award and use the credits towards the credit requirements for that award if they are deemed appropriate either through credit transfer or by using the RPL procedures. The minor awards are:

- **Certificate of Credit:** Minimum 10 credits at any level between 3 and 8.
- **Certificate of Continuing Education/Certificate of Continuing Professional Development:** Minimum 30 credits at any level between 3 and 8. In some circumstances these awards may be validated with a professionally recognised title, such as Practice Certificate.
- **Foundation Certificate:** 60 credits at level 3.
- **University Certificate:** 60 credits at level 4.
- **University Diploma:** 60 credits at level 5.
- **University Advanced Diploma:** 60 credits at level 6.

B4.6 **Higher National Diploma [HND]** programmes (offered under licence) are normally designed to progress from level 4 to level 5, accruing 120 credits at each level to a minimum of 240 credits. A mandatory or optional work placement (section B5) may be included as part of, or in addition to, the two stages of study.

Higher National Certificate [HNC] programmes (offered under licence) are normally designed to accrue a minimum of 120 credits at level 4. HNC programmes normally operate for students in employment and hence there is no work placement element.

B4.7 **Foundation degree [FdA/FdEng/FdSc]** programmes are normally designed to progress from level 4 to level 5, accruing 120 credits at each level to a minimum of 240 credits and should comprise a major work based element. They are discrete awards that on completion may permit entry into level 6 of a Bachelor degree programme. Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) may be awarded on achievement of the general credit requirements of the award.

B4.8 **Bachelor's degree with honours [BA, BEd, BOst, BSc, LLB]** programmes are normally designed to progress from level 4 to level 6, accruing 120 credits at each

level to a minimum total of 360 credits. Step off points on achievement of the general credit requirements at levels 4 and 5 may be awarded Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) or Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) respectively.

- Where a Bachelor's degree with honours is a 4 year programme, i.e. Bachelors subject with foundation, an additional 120 is required. Minimum total of 480 credits is required.
- From September 2009 **Independent Study** in the form of a module at level 6 is no longer a mandatory component of an honours degree programme.
- A mandatory or optional **work placement** (section B5) may be included as part of, or in addition to, the three stages of study.
- Bachelor degree programmes will lead to the award of a BA or a BSc or to a more closely defined award restricted to certain subjects and type of programmes, for example Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) or Bachelor of Education.
- Bachelor of Arts (BA) is generally used in art and design, the arts and humanities and areas of social or business studies. The award of Bachelor of Science (BSc) is generally used in technology, science or mathematics and their applications. Exceptions to this convention may be only agreed at validation in light of evidence sufficient to justify different practice.
- The award of Bachelor of Laws (LLB) is reserved for programmes of specialist study in law.

B4.9 Bachelor's degree programmes are normally designed to progress from level 4 to level 6, accruing 120 credits at levels 4 and 5, and 60 credits at level 6 to a minimum total of 300 credits. Step off points on achievement of the general credit requirements at levels 4 and 5 may be awarded Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) or Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) respectively.

- Where a Bachelor's degree is a 4 year programme, i.e. Bachelors subject with foundation an additional 120 is required. Minimum total of 420 credits is required.
- A mandatory or optional **work placement** (section B5) may be included as part of, or in addition to, the three stages of study.

B4.10 Credit requirements for named subjects for Joint Honours: All Joint Honours programmes must conform to the general University Credit requirements for Undergraduate study (B4.4). In order to be valid, a pathway must conform to the following credit requirements across levels 5 and 6.

| | Credit | | Subject A | Subject B |
|------------------------|--------|-----|--|---|
| Joint Programmes | 120 | 120 | Usually taken as 60 credits in each subject at Level 5 and 60 credits in each subject at Level 6 | A minimum of 100 credits should be taken in each subject, at least 40 of which needs to be at level 6 |
| Major/Minor Programmes | 160 | 80 | Usually taken as 80 credits major and 40 credits minor at Level 5; and taken as 80 credits major and 40 credits minor at Level 6 | In a major subject a minimum of 160 credits must be studied, at least 60 of which needs to be at level 6. In the minor subject a minimum of 60 credits must be studied, at least 20 of which needs to be at level 6 |

- B4.10.1 Elective modules: Exceptionally, students may take a maximum of 40 credits across the degree from subject areas within the scheme. A Joint Honours Lead will approve such instances on a case-by-case basis in conjunction with the relevant Subject Leaders.
- B4.10.2 The subjects named in the final degree shall be determined solely by the credit achieved at Levels 5 and 6.
- B4.10.3 Prescribed Module Limits: A Subject may have a prescribed module diet that is in excess of the minimum requirements above, subject to the following limits:
- Major Subjects: 80 credits at any Level
 - Joint Subjects: 60 credits at any Level
 - Minor Subjects: 20 credits at any Level
- B4.10.4 Pathway Confirmation: A student is required to confirm their Pathway at the end of Stage 1. Subsequent pathway changes may only be enacted with the approval of the Joint Honours Scheme Lead.
- B4.10.5 Failure to meet subject credit requirements: If, at the end of Stage 3, a student has failed to meet the minimum credit requirement for one of the subjects in their pathway, then the nomenclature 'Combined Studies' shall be substituted for that subject.
- B4.10.6 Pass Degrees and Interim Awards: Pass Degrees shall have the nomenclature 'Combined Studies'. The subjects studied will not be named. Certificates and Diplomas of Higher Education shall have the nomenclature 'in Combined Studies'. The subjects studied will not be named.

- B4.11 Integrated Master's Degree [MSubject – see Part A2 for current approved titles]** programmes are normally designed to progress from level 4 to level 7 accruing a minimum of 120 credits at levels 4 and 5, 60 credits at level 6 and a minimum of 120 credits at level 7. Step-off awards of Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education, Bachelor's degree and Bachelor's degree with Honours are available. Stage 4 leads to the award of Integrated Masters with a minimum total of 480 credits. The Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma step-off awards may be available if the programme design is suitable.
- B4.12 Master's Degree [MA, MBA, MEd, MSc, LLM]** programmes are normally designed to provide a minimum of 180 credits at level 7. Three postgraduate stages are recognised leading to the following awards: Stage 1 leads to the Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert) with a minimum total of 60 credits; Stage 2 leads to the Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip) with a minimum total of 120 credits; and Stage 3 leads to the award of Master's Degree with a minimum total of 180 credits.
- **Independent Scholarship** has a credit value of 60 credits at level 7. Exceptions to this position may be approved at programme validation.
 - Master's degrees may lead to the award of either MA or MSc or to a more closely defined award restricted to certain specific areas of study, for example Master of Engineering (MEng) or Master of Business Administration (MBA).
 - Master of Arts (MA) is generally used in art and design, the arts and humanities and areas of social and business studies. The title Master of Science (MSc) is generally used in technology, science or mathematics and their applications. Exceptions to this convention may be agreed only at validation in the light of evidence sufficient to justify different practices.
 - The award of Master of Laws (LLM) is reserved for programmes of specialist study in law.
- B4.13 Master's Advanced Diploma [MAdDip]** award is available to master's graduates who wish to take a further master's level award in a closely allied discipline and where, as a consequence, the student has already satisfied the learning outcomes of the first (PgCert) and second stages (PgDip). The award requires 60 credits at level 7 from the third stage (Master's Degree) only.
- B4.14 Master of Research Degree [MRes]** programmes are normally designed to provide a minimum of 180 credits at level 7. Three postgraduate stages are recognised leading to the following awards. Stage 1 leads to the Postgraduate Certificate in Research Training with a minimum of 60 credits; Stage 2 leads to a Postgraduate Diploma in Research Training with a minimum total of 120 credits; and Stage 3 leads to the award of Master of Research Degree with a minimum total of 180 credits. The generic structure of the Master of Research Degree is shown in G10.3.

- **Independent Research** has a credit value of 20 credits at level 7 for the award of Postgraduate Diploma and 80 credits at level 7 for the award of Master of Research Degree. Students embark on the independent research in Postgraduate Diploma stage.

B4.15 **Master of Professional Practice [MPPr]** programmes are normally designed to provide a minimum of 180 credits at level 7. Three postgraduate stages are recognised leading to the following awards. Stage 1 leads to the Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice with a minimum of 60 credits; Stage 2 leads to a Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice with a minimum total of 120 credits; Stage 3 leads to the award of Master of Professional Practice with a minimum total of 180 credits. The generic structure of the Professional Master's Degree is shown in G10.4.

B4.16 **Doctor of Practice [DProf, DBA, EdD, DPharm, etc]** programmes are normally designed to progress from level 7 to level 8 to a minimum total of 540 credits. At least 420 credits must be achieved through independent research at level 8. The remaining 120 credits should be achieved at level 7, with the exception that up to 20 credits may be contributed from levels 5 or 6 where programme regulations permit. No credits may be contributed from levels lower than level 5. At least 60 credits at level 7 must be achieved in research skills. The generic structure of the Professional Doctorate Degree is shown in G10.5.

B5 Work Placements in Undergraduate Programmes

B5.1 Work placements can be mandatory or optional, and may vary from a year full-time placement to a single placement module. Work placements normally occur in the following categories:

- As an integral (mandatory) part of a University qualification, regulated by external (government or professional) requirements (e.g. teaching or nursing qualifications).
- As an integral part of a University qualification (i.e. when validated as one or more modules with the credit requirements of the programme).
- As part of a University programme with an additional and separate qualification such the **University Diploma in Professional Practice** (e.g. a sandwich year).
- As part of a University programme with no additional qualification (e.g. a shorter placement which does not merit, or for which the programme team elect not to offer, an additional qualification).

- B5.2 The **University Diploma in Professional Practice** is a free-standing qualification (60 credits at level 5) that is awarded on successful completion of a one-year placement (a sandwich year) that is additional to the credit requirement of the validated programme.
- B5.3 Where students are required to successfully complete a mandatory placement in order to achieve the award for which they are registered, they may also achieve the University Diploma in Professional Practice (if applicable). Any student who can demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes of the placement through prior experience may seek exemption from the placement, but will not be eligible to receive the additional award.
- B5.4 The operation and management of work placements are detailed in the University's Policy for Work Place Learning.