

The University of Northampton Academic Regulations for Taught Degrees 2023/24

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Preamble – Introduction to the Academic Regulations

The University of Northampton (UN) is a statutory body which derives its powers from an order of Council dated 25 August 2005. Its operation is governed by an Instrument and Articles of Government approved by the Privy Council in August 2005 and subsequent approved amendments.

The University has been granted degree awarding powers by the Privy Council. The degree awarding powers have three principal aspects:

- The power to establish academic awards, Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates and other academic awards and distinctions and to determine the terms and conditions for granting and conferring such awards and distinctions.
- The power to confer academic awards and distinctions on candidates who have pursued approved programmes of study and have passed such examinations or other assessments as required by the University.
- The power to confer honorary awards on selected persons of distinction.

The purpose of these regulations is to provide a framework to enable the University to confer Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other academic awards and distinctions that are consistent in standard to those of other Higher Education Institutions in the United Kingdom. The University subscribes to the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#) and pays due regard to the [QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) in the management of the academic quality and the standards of its awards. All awards are aligned with the [QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland](#).

These regulations reflect the University's requirement to observe all relevant national legislation.

The Academic Regulations are subject to the annual review and approval of the University's Senate.

These Regulations cover all taught study leading to an award or award of credit of the University of Northampton, including study delivered in collaboration. To this end, they cover programmes of study and stand-alone modules that sit within the University Modular Framework (UMF), those that sit outside the UMF as long as those programmes and/or modules are credit-bearing.

Section 1 – The Admission of Students and Associate Students

- 1.1 The University's entry requirements are set out on the University website and in the Admissions Policy. It is the policy of the University to admit students who are able to demonstrate the potential to benefit from, and have a reasonable chance of successfully completing, a programme of study. It does not assume that ability to benefit must be demonstrated through the formal achievement of specific qualifications.
- 1.2 If an applicant for admission to a programme is unable to present evidence relating to the general entry requirements, they may be considered for 'special admission'. In such cases the Special Admissions Policy must be followed.
- 1.3 If an applicant has been made an unconditional offer, this offer applies only to the specific programme to which that applicant has applied. If, once enrolled as a student, the student requests to transfer to a different programme, or withdraws and reapplies to a different programme, the University will consider the student's actual qualifications gained prior to entry to the University and not any predicted grades on which the original unconditional offer was made.
- 1.4 Applicants who have completed a University of Northampton Higher National Diploma (HND), Foundation Degree (FD), or equivalent at a collaborative organisation, will be considered for entry onto an appropriate top-up programme. They may also be considered as a direct entrant onto Level 6 of a degree programme if the relevant Programme Specification specifies that this is a possibility and if the applicant has met the required standard as set out in the Programme Specification.
- 1.5 An individual may be admitted as an Associate Student, studying up to 40 credits in an academic year. Associate Students may choose whether or not to take the assessment for any module studied. Assessment must be completed for credit to be awarded. An Associate Student may apply to join a degree programme via the Special Admissions Policy and may seek credit for study completed as an Associate Student. Any modules failed as an Associate Student will be taken into account in relation to the University's progression regulations.
- 1.6 During the admissions process, applicants may wish to apply for accreditation of prior certificated learning (APCL) and/or accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) and/or credit transfer (see the APL and Credit Transfer Policy for more information).
- 1.7 APL/Credit Transfer will be for a minimum of one module; credit for partial modules cannot be given. The maximum amount of APL/Credit Transfer credit that can be used towards an award will normally be no more than two thirds of the award with which the student exits.
- 1.8 APL/Credit Transfer cannot be awarded for principal modules or for any modules at Level 3 or Level 6. Exceptionally, advanced standing may be awarded to registered practising

nurses/midwives who return to study a second nursing speciality.

- 1.9 The classification of the award, or any calculation of Merit or Distinction, will be based only upon the credit achieved as a result of studying University of Northampton modules.
- 1.10 Where students have a University of Northampton HND, FD or equivalent with a collaborative organisation and are moving to a Level 6 award, or topping-up that previous University of Northampton award, the previous University of Northampton award is treated as an entry requirement rather than APL/Credit Transfer. In such situations, classification of the top-up award is based only on credits awarded during the current University of Northampton programme of study.
- 1.11 The discovery of a relevant fraudulent, untrue or misleading statement, or one which omits pertinent facts at any stage in the application process (including on an application, during the selection process, e.g. at interview or audition, or at enrolment) will normally lead to an immediate withdrawal of any offer of a place. Such a discovery after a student has been enrolled may lead to the Academic Registrar (or their nominee) declaring the enrolment void, in which case the student will be required to withdraw from the University.
- 1.12 Students who are admitted to the University should complete enrolment before the start date specified in their offer letter. Students are not entitled to attend classes or have access to facilities until enrolment has been fully completed. In all cases, students must have completed enrolment no later than two weeks after the specified start date.
- 1.13 Students must enrol at the start of each subsequent year of their programme, unless a study break has been approved in advance.
- 1.14 A student who has not enrolled, or paid the appropriate fees, by the published deadline in any year of study will be assumed to have withdrawn from their studies, and their record will be closed.
- 1.15 The University reserves the right to decline or withdraw the enrolment of students who do not hold the appropriate immigration status, or who fail to comply with the conditions of their visa.
- 1.16 A student cannot begin to study a module after the end of week 2 of teaching. After the end of week 2, modules are fixed for the semester, tuition fees will be payable, and the modules will be awarded a grade.
- 1.17 Students are not normally allowed to undertake two programmes of study at the University concurrently.

Section 2 – Awards of the University

2.1 Award Titles

- 1 All awards are based on programmes of study. A programme of study is the approved curriculum followed by an individual student. It may be identical to a 'programme' or be one of a number of standard routes available within a larger programme scheme. However achieved, the programme of study will satisfy the requirements of the University (as set out in these regulations) and any relevant validating or professional body.
- 2 The title of an award will be approved by Senate as part of the validation of a programme.
- 3 The award of a taught degree in Arts (Master of Arts [MA], Bachelor of Arts [BA] and Foundation Degree in Arts [FdA]) is reserved for studies in art and design, the arts and humanities, combined studies in the arts and social sciences and in the areas of social or business studies where appropriate.

The award of a taught degree in Science (Master of Science [MSc], Bachelor of Science [BSc] and Foundation Degree in Science [FdSc]) is reserved for programmes substantially based on science, mathematics or the application of those subjects.

The award of a degree in Engineering (Master of Engineering [MEng] or Bachelor of Engineering [BEng]) will be reserved for programmes substantially based on elements of engineering or their application

- 4 Programmes will only lead to an award of a postgraduate title if the required volume of credits is assessed at Level 7 (see Table 1). Programmes with graduate entry requirements but where fewer than the required number of credits are assessed at Level 7 will lead to a graduate certificate or graduate diploma.
- 5 Differentiation:
 - Honours degrees with different titles must have common content of no more than 50% of the credits at Levels 5 and 6 taken together. Honours degree pathways must have common content of between 50% and 75% of the credits at Levels 5 and 6 taken together.
 - Where undergraduate degrees have no Level 6 the maximum percentage of common content is 50% (for different titles) and 50-75% (for pathways) of the credits studied at the highest level to which that degree is studied. For two year programmes where differentiation at Level 5 may

lead to either a pathway or a different award title the differentiation at Level 4 will also be taken into consideration.

- Postgraduate degrees with different titles must differ in their dissertations (for Masters degrees) plus no fewer than 40 credits of taught provision. For a named Postgraduate Certificate (i.e. a 60 credit programme) there will need to be 20 credits of differentiation. Masters degree pathways must differ in their dissertations plus between 20 and 40 credits of taught provision.

6 Naming:

- Parentheses may only be used to indicate a pathway or specialism within a broad portfolio of awards.
- The use of dashes, solid marks or other separation marks is not permitted.
- Award titles should not normally reflect more than three subject components. Where there are more than three significant components an award of Combined Studies will be made. An award of Combined Studies will also be made where a student has not met the requirements of the relevant Award Map¹.

7 Joint Honours awards:

- BA (Hons) Law & Criminology
- BA (Hons) Psychology and Criminology

2.2 Completion of an Award

- 1 All students are registered for a Final Award and pursue a programme of studies intended to lead to that award. This does not apply to Associate Students (see Section 1.2).
- 2 Taught awards are defined in terms of the number of credits and their level (see Table 1). To be eligible for a specific named taught award a student must have completed a programme of studies as set out in the relevant award map². The student must also have fulfilled the requirements for registration (see Table 2).
- 3 Qualifications are awarded to mark the achievement of positively defined outcomes. The University of Northampton specifies that the outcomes

¹ See Appendix 2 for more information on combined studies awards

² Where programmes are delivered through partners a separate award map may exist for each collaborative organisation and for the 'home' programme. Compulsory modules would normally be the same but a more restricted number of designated modules may be available at collaborative organisations.

required for each of its qualifications are specified clearly. Achievement of those outcomes must be demonstrated before a qualification is awarded. Assessment procedures that permit compensation or condonement are not applied in a way that might allow a qualification to be awarded without achievement of the full outcomes being demonstrated.

- 4 Where a student has failed to meet the requirements of the Final Award they may be awarded an Intermediate Award (see Section 2.5). Intermediate Awards will only be awarded if the student has demonstrated the outcomes required for that qualification.
- 5 Where a student has achieved the required number of credits at the required level for an award but has not met the requirements of any professional body accrediting that award an alternative title will be awarded³.
- 6 Students who are not eligible for an award may be awarded a transcript or student results letter documenting the credits they have achieved.
- 7 The University stipulates a period of time in which a student must complete the award for which they are registered. The maximum and minimum registration periods for Framework awards are detailed in Table 2. These maximum and minimum periods measure the academic years between commencement (initial registration) on the programme and achievement of the award. A student will not be permitted to continue on a programme which they are unable to complete within the registration period. In exceptional circumstances, permission may be given to extend this period by the Academic Registrar or nominee. This decision will be informed by the currency of the contributing study and the student's rate of achievement.
- 8 The registration period for a student who registers on a programme of study, withdraws from that programme of study at a point in time and then re-joins that same programme of study at a later date will be measured from the start of the initial registration; in other words, the registration period does not start afresh when the student re-joins the programme of study.
- 8 Students are not normally allowed to study two programmes of study of the University concurrently. Where a student wishes to do so they must apply to the Academic Registrar or nominee at the point of admission or a point

³ This will include students who achieved the required number of credits but are found unfit to practise.

at which modules are selected for a further stage of study, providing a rationale for this.

- 9 A student may request that they undertake cross-institutional concurrent learning, in accordance with the principles set out in the Cross-Institutional Concurrent Learning Policy.
- 10 Regulations related to professional awards may override the maximum period of registration, as may the rules associated with students studying with a visa⁴.

2.3 Eligibility for specific Awards

- 1 The taught awards available at the University of Northampton are:

Level 7:

- Master's Degree (MA, MSc, MPhil, MBA, LLM, MRes, MCLinRes)
- Integrated Master's (MEng)
- Postgraduate Diploma
- Postgraduate /Professional Certificate

Level 6:

- Graduate Diploma (GradDip)
- Graduate Certificate (GradCert)
- Bachelor Degree with Honours (BA, BSc, LLB, BEng, BBA)⁵
- Bachelor (Ordinary Degree)

Level 5:

- Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE)
- Higher National Diploma (HND)
- Foundation Degree (FdA, FdSc)

Level 4:

- Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE)
- Higher National Certificate (HNC)

Others:

- University Diploma
- University Certificate
- Professional awards

- 2 Eligibility for a named award depends on successful demonstration of performance against the relevant Level Descriptors for that award,

⁴ Currently, students with study visas who are studying for an award at level 6 or above can normally study for 5 years only and those studying for an award of Level 5 or below can normally study for 2 years only unless they qualify for an exemption under the UK immigration rules.

⁵ This includes a Bachelor Degrees with Honours awarded following completion of a L6 top-up degree

successful demonstration of the expected characteristics of that award and successful completion of the requirements of that award.

- 3 Level Descriptors and expected characteristics can be found in Appendix 1. Requirements for awards are as follows:

Master's degrees (MA, MSc, LLM, MBA, MRes, MClInRes): 180 credits at level 7 and to have satisfied the requirements of the appropriate award map. The QAA Credit Framework states that 30 credits at level 6 may be permissible for inclusion in a Master's award. The University of Northampton permits APL for specific CPD credits to this value as specified in the admissions requirements for the award, provided that they are not double counted.

Master of Engineering (MEng): 480 credits across levels 4 to 7, with at least 120 credits at level 7.

Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip): at least 120 credits at level 7 not including a principal module and have satisfied the requirements of the appropriate award map. An unnamed postgraduate diploma may be awarded if a student has obtained 120 credits at level 7 (which may include the principal module).

Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert): normally given as an intermediate award on a master's programme but may exceptionally be given following the successful completion of a free-standing programme of study worth 60 credits at level 7.

Postgraduate/Professional Certificate in Education (Early Years/Primary/Secondary) (PGCE with QTS): designed in line with the Training and Development Agency (TDA) Professional Standards for Qualified Status and Requirements for Initial Teacher Training (ITT).

Comprises Level 7 modules and a professional strand. All students will register for the PGCE (QTS) Early Years, Primary or Secondary and if successful will gain this award and 60 credits towards an MA (this constitutes one third of a future MA qualification). Should a student fail one or more of the two MA modules but pass the professional strand they would receive a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (QTS) Early Years, Primary or Secondary. The professional strand of the programme consists of school placements, assessments, core curriculum portfolios and presentations in the foundation subjects.

The normal length of the programme will be one full-time academic year or equivalent. To achieve the award, a graduate in an appropriate discipline

must successfully complete the study of the theory and practice of teaching on a programme and demonstrate practical competence in teaching.

The QTS Skills Test must be completed successfully.

Graduate Diploma (GradDip): 120 credits with all credits at level 6 or above, where insufficient credits are at level 7 to enable the award of a Postgraduate Diploma.

Graduate Certificate (GradCert): 60 credits with all credits at level 6 or above, where insufficient credits are at level 7 to enable the award of a Postgraduate Certificate.

Bachelor's Degree with Honours (BA, BSc, LLB, BEng, BBA): 360 credits in accordance with the requirements of the Award Map, including at least 120 credits at Level 6 and 100 credits at Level 5. A Principal module at Level 6 must be studied.

Where a student has completed a L6 top-up degree at the University of Northampton, the remaining 240 credits will have been recognised as part of the admissions process.

To be eligible for a joint honours joint award, a student must gain credit at each stage as follows:

- Stage One – 60 credits from each subject as specified on the Award Map.
- Stage Two – 60 credits of each subject
- Stage Three - 60 credits of each subject including a Principal Module in one of the subjects.

A student is eligible for a Combined Studies award, when they have achieved the credit requirement for an Honours Degree (as in Table 1) but the credits do not comply with the requirement of Award Map for which they are registered. At the discretion of the Award and Status Board a parenthetical description of the main area of study may be appended, e.g. BA (Hons) Combined Studies (Accounting).

Ordinary Degree: at least 300 credits in accordance with the requirements of the Award Map, including at least 60 credits at Level 6 and 100 credits at Level 5.

Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE): at least 240 credits in accordance with the requirements of the Award Map, including no fewer than 100 credits at level 5.

Higher National Diploma (HND): at least 240 credits in accordance with the requirements of the Award Map, including no fewer than 100 credits at level 5.

Foundation Degree (FdA, FSc): at least 240 credits in accordance with the requirements of the Award Map, including no fewer than 100 credits at level 5.

Certificate in HE (CertHE): at least 120 credits in accordance with the requirements of the Award Map, with at least 120 credits at level 4.

Higher National Certificate (HNC): at least 120 credits in accordance with the award map, with at least 120 credits at level 4.

4 Others:

- **University Diploma:** 120 credits at any of levels 4, 5 or 6 in accordance with the requirements of the Award Map and the demands of the professional body.
- **University Certificate:** 60 credits at any of levels 4, 5 or 6 in accordance with the requirements of the Award Map and the demands of the professional body.
- **Certificate in Teaching and Learning in the Lifelong Learning Sector (QTLS):** 60 credits at Level 4 and 60 credits at Level 5
- **Professional Graduate Certificate in Education: Teaching & Learning in the Lifelong Learning Sector (QTLS):** 60 credits at Level 4 and 60 credits at level 6.

2.4 Award Classifications

- 1 **Postgraduate Research Diploma:** not classified
- 2 **Postgraduate Research Certificate:** not classified
- 3 **Master's Degrees (MA, MSc, MBA, LLM, MRes, MClInRes):** Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Classification will be derived from the following:

- The grade for the principal module (dissertation or equivalent module).
- The highest grades from the remaining Level modules making 160 credits in total⁶.

The class awarded will be derived from this set of grades as the higher of

- The mean;
- The median.

All module grades so counted will be weighted according to the credit value of each module.

A Distinction will be awarded when a student has achieved a mean and/or median grade of at least A-across modules amounting to 160 credits, including the principal module.

A Merit will be awarded when a student has achieved a mean and/or median grade of at least B- across modules amounting to 160 credits, and is not eligible for a Master's Degree with Distinction.

Where a master's degree top-up has been studied, classification will be derived from the following:

- Where a Top-Up is comprised of 80 credits or fewer, the grades from all modules undertaken as part of the top-up will be included in the calculation of the classification.
- Where a top-up is comprised of more than 80 credits, the module(s) awarded the lowest grade(s) up to a maximum of 20 credits will be discounted, noting that at all times at least 80 credits must be included in the classification algorithm and that the principal module (dissertation or equivalent module) can never be discounted.

⁶ As clarification on the workings of the algorithm - at module level an alphabetical grade is mapped to a range of numeric values (see Table 3) and it is these values are used by the algorithm to determine classification

Where a student enters a Master's programme with advanced standing, such that the full 180 credits are not studied at the University on this current programme of study due to APL being awarded for some of the credits, classification will be derived from the following (noting that only grades from credits studied at the University of Northampton on the current programme of study will be counted in the algorithm):

- Where the student's programme of study, after discounting the modules for which APL has been awarded, is comprised of 80 credits or fewer, the grades from all modules undertaken in the programme of study will be included in the calculation of the classification.
- Where the student's programme of study, after discounting the modules for which APL has been awarded, is comprised of more than 80 credits, the module(s) awarded the lowest grade(s) up to a maximum of 20 credits will be discounted, noting that at all times at least 80 credits must be included in the classification algorithm and that the principal module (dissertation or equivalent module) can never be discounted.

The class awarded will be derived from this set of grades as the higher of

- The mean;
- The median.

All module grades so counted will be weighted according to the credit value of each module.

A Distinction will be awarded when a student has achieved a mean and/or median grade of at least A- across the modules included as per the above criteria, including the principal module.

A Merit will be awarded when a student has achieved a mean and/or median grade of at least B- across modules included as per the above criteria, and is not eligible for a Master's Degree with Distinction.

6 Master of Engineering (MEng): Pass, Merit or Distinction.

The class awarded will be derived from the:

- Highest grades from the Level 7 modules making 100 credits in total which must include the principal module. All are double weighted.
- The highest grades from remaining Level 7, Level 6 and Level 5 modules where taken together, amounting to a further 200 credits.

7 Postgraduate Diploma: Pass, Merit or Distinction

The class awarded will be derived from the set of grades as the higher of the mean and the median.

- A Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction will be awarded when a student has achieved a mean grade of at least A- across modules amounting to 100 credits.
- A Postgraduate Diploma with Merit will be awarded when a student has achieved a mean grade of at least B- across modules amounting to 100 credits and is not eligible for the Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction.

8 Postgraduate/Professional Certificate in Education (EarlyYears/ Primary/ Secondary) (PGCE with QTS): not classified.

9 Postgraduate Certificate: not classified.

10 Graduate Diploma: Pass, Merit or Distinction.

11 Graduate Certificate: not classified.

12 Bachelor's Degree with Honours (BA, BSc, LLB, BEng): 1st, 2:1, 2:2, 3rd.

Classification will be derived from Level 5 and Level 6 modules taken, (weighted according to credit value) as follows:

- The grade for the principal module (dissertation or equivalent module).
- The highest grades from the remaining Level 6 modules (making 100 credits in total including the principal module) which will be double weighted.
- The highest grades from remaining Level 6 module(s) and Level 5 modules where taken together, amounting to a further 100 credits.

For students who have followed a standard Bachelor's degree programme having entered with advanced standing, the classification will be calculated from a profile of grades which includes the highest 100 credits at Level 6 double weighted, plus the next highest grades from Level 5 and 6 modules taken, discounting the lowest grade(s) for 40 credits.

For students who have followed a programme of study that contains Level 5 and Level 6 credits only, the classification will be calculated from a profile of grades which includes the highest 100 credits at Level 6 double weighted, plus the next highest grades from Level 5 and 6 modules taken, discounting the lowest grade(s) for 40 credits.

For students who have followed a Level 6 only top-up programme, the classification will be calculated from the highest 100 credits at Level 6 double weighted.

The class awarded will be derived from this set of grades as the higher of

- The mean;
- The median.

All module grades so counted will be weighted according to the credit value of each module.

The requirements for each class are therefore as follows⁷:

- First Class (1st): Mean of A- or above; or More than half the counting grades A- or above.
- Upper Second (2:1): Mean of B- or above; Or More than half the counting grades B- or above; And Requirements for a higher class not met.
- Lower Second (2:2): Mean of C- or above; Or More than half the counting grades C- or above; And Requirements for a higher class not met.
- Third Class (3rd): Requirements for an honours degree achieved; And Requirements for a higher class not met.

13 Ordinary Degree: not classified.

14 Foundation Degree (FdSc, FdA): Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Distinction or Merit will be derived from the highest grades for Level 5 modules, amounting to 100 credits, or all grades awarded following admission with APL if less than 100 credits. All module grades so counted will be weighted according to the credit value of each module:

- Where a student obtains a mean of A- or above, or a median of A- or above, they will be awarded a Distinction.
- Where a student obtains a mean of B- or above or a median of B- or above and they are not eligible for a Distinction, they will be awarded a Merit.
- Where a student has met the demands of the Award Map but does not satisfy the conditions for Distinction/Merit, they will be awarded a Foundation Degree.

15 Higher National Diploma (HND): Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Distinction or Merit will be derived from the highest grades for Level 5 modules, amounting to 100 credits, or all grades awarded following

⁷ As clarification on the workings of the algorithm: 1) the term 'more than half' below takes account of differential credit rating and is simply a guide; and 2) at module level an alphabetical grade is mapped to a range of numeric values (see Table 4) and it is these values are used by the algorithm to determine classification

admission with APL if less than 100 credits. All module grades so counted will be weighted according to the credit value of each module.

- Where a student obtains a mean of A- or above, or a median of A- or above, they will be awarded a Distinction.
- Where a student obtains a mean of B- or above or a median of B- or above and they are not eligible for a Distinction, they will be awarded a Merit.

16 Diploma of Higher Education: Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Distinction or Merit will be derived from the highest grades for Level 5 or 6 modules, amounting to 100 credits, or all grades awarded following admission with APL if less than 100 credits. All module grades so counted will be weighted according to the credit value of each module.

- Where a student obtains a mean of A- or above, or a median of A- or above, they will be awarded a Distinction.
- Where a student obtains a mean of B- or above or a median of B- or above and they are not eligible for a Distinction, they will be awarded a Merit.
- Where a student satisfies the demands of the Award Map but does not satisfy the conditions for Distinction/Merit, they will be awarded a Diploma of Higher Education.

17 Higher National Certificate (HNC):

For those with 150/160 credits: Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Distinction and Merit will be derived from the highest grades amounting to 100 credits, or all grades awarded following admission with APL if less than 100 credits. All module grades so counted will be weighted according to the credit value of each module.

- Where a student obtains a mean of A- or above, or a median of A- or above, s/he will be awarded a Distinction.
- Where a student obtains a mean of B- or above or a median of B- or above and s/he is not eligible for a Distinction, s/he will be awarded a Merit.

For those with 120 credits: Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Distinction and Merit will be derived from the highest grades amounting to 100 credits, or all grades awarded following admission with APL if less than 100 credits. All module grades so counted will be weighted according to the credit value of each module.

- Where a student obtains a mean of A- or above, or a median of A- or above, s/he will be awarded a Distinction.
- Where a student obtains a mean of B- or above or a median of B- or above and s/he is not eligible for a Distinction, s/he will be awarded a Merit.

18 Certificate of Higher Education: Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Distinction and Merit will be derived from the highest grades amounting to 100 credits, or all grades awarded following admission with APL if less than 100 credits. All module grades so counted will be weighted according to the credit value of each module.

- Where a student obtains a mean of A- or above, or a median of A- or above, they will be awarded a Distinction.
- Where a student obtains a mean of B- or above or a median of B- or above and they are not eligible for a Distinction, they will be awarded a Merit.

19 Others:

- Certificate in Teaching and Learning in the Lifelong Learning Sector: not classified
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education: Teaching & Learning in the Lifelong Learning Sector (QTLS): not classified
- BTEC Professional Award and BTEC Professional Diploma: not classified.

2.5 Intermediate Awards

- 1 An intermediate award is an award which a student can achieve after partial completion of a programme of study once they are no longer registered for that award or another award on which the completed credits will be used. It cannot solely be used to provide a lower award for a student who has failed to achieve the Final Award.
- 2 Regulations for assessment and progression shall detail how the Intermediate Award may be achieved. The aims, objectives and curriculum of the programme must be drawn in such a way that the programme to the point of Intermediate Award is complete and coherent in its own right.
- 3 The admissions regulations must be the same as for the Final Award.
- 4 Where a programme of study provides for an intermediate award, all students who complete a stage and do not wish to continue their studies are considered for eligibility in relation to the appropriate intermediate award.
- 5 A student can substitute credits from a higher level for those from a lower level to qualify for an intermediate award.
- 6 A student who has been awarded an intermediate award retains the right to appeal against termination. If the appeal is unsuccessful the decision to award the intermediate award will prevail.
- 7 A student who exits with an intermediate award through choice rather than because of termination retains the entitlement to apply to complete the final award subject to confirmation that the learning is still current and once a period of at least 12 months has passed since the conferment of the intermediate award. Such applications will be considered through the Admissions team.

A student who is awarded an intermediate award following termination is not allowed to apply to return and complete the final award at a later stage.
- 8 The Certificate in Higher Education, Diploma in Higher Education and Ordinary Degree are the standard intermediate awards on an undergraduate degree programme:
 - The Certificate in Higher Education will not normally be named as the content of the study will invariably be generic. The case may be made for the Certificate to be named in special circumstances, such as professional body accreditation. Any variation from the norm will require

the agreement of the Academic Registrar or nominee and formal approval at validation. Certificates should normally signify learning outcomes which would imply study equivalent to at least one-third of the total degree award.

- The Diploma of Higher Education will normally carry the title of the corresponding Honours degree⁸ and should normally signify study equivalent to at least two-thirds of the total degree award.
- The Ordinary Degree will normally carry the title of the corresponding Honours degree⁹.

9 The Postgraduate Certificate and the Postgraduate Diploma are the standard intermediate awards on a Master's degree programme:

- The Postgraduate Certificate does not generally carry a title unless it has been validated and named on the Award Map and should normally signify learning outcomes which would imply study equivalent to at least one-third of a full-time academic year.
- The Postgraduate Diploma will normally carry the title of the corresponding Master's degree and should normally signify study equivalent to at least two-thirds of a full-time academic year.

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FHE	Qualification	Total credits needed	Credits at FHEQ	ECTS	Comments
7	Master's Degree	180	150	90	
	Master of Philosophy (MPhil)	Credit not used	Credit not used	Credit not used	
	Integrated Master's (MEng)	480	120	240	
	Postgraduate Diploma	120	90	60	
	Postgraduate /Professional Certificate	60	60	30	Generally 60 ECTS are minimum

⁸ There are exceptions to this on some professional programmes, where the title of the Honours degree carries protected status. The titles of DipHE awards in such cases are listed in the Supplementary Regulations

⁹ There are exceptions to this:

- 1) On some professional programmes, where the title of the Honours degree carries protected status. The titles of Ordinary Degrees in such cases are listed in the Supplementary Regulations;
- 2) With some Interdisciplinary (i.e. 50:50) Joint Degrees where a student has failed to achieve **any** Level 6 credits in one of the subject areas. In such cases, students will be awarded Subject X with Subject Y

FHE	Qualification	Total credits needed	Credits at FHEQ	ECTS	Comments
6	Bachelor (Honours) (BA, BSc, LLB, BBA, BEng)	360	120	180	A Principal module and no fewer than 100 credits at level 5
	Bachelor (Honours) (BA, BSc, LLB, BBA, BEng) with foundation component	480	120	240	A Principal module and no fewer than 100 credits at level 5 120 credits at Level 3
	Bachelor (Ordinary Degree)	300	60	150	No fewer than 100 credits at level 5
	Graduate Diploma (Grad Dip)	120	120	60	
	Graduate Certificate (Grad Cert)	60	60		
5	Diploma in Higher Education (Dip HE)	240	120	120	Not less than 100 credits @ level 5
	Higher National Diploma (HND)	240	120	120	Not less than 100 credits @ level 5
	Foundation Degree (FdA, FdSc)	240	120	120	Not less than 100 credits @ level 5
4	Certificate in Higher Education (Cert HE)	120	120	60	
	Higher National Certificate (HNC)	120	120	60	Some HNCs remain at 150/160 credits
Variabl	University Diploma	120	120	60	
	University Certificate	60		30	

FHE	Qualification	Total credits needed	Credits at FHEQ	ECTS	Comments
	Professional awards	Some professional awards do not conform to these credit requirements. See supplementary regulations for specific details			

Table 1: Framework of Higher Education Qualifications

Award	Total credit	Min period	Min with APL	Max period
Undergraduate				
Honours Degree	360	2 years	1 year	9 years
Honours Degree with Foundation	480	4 years	n/a	9 years
Ordinary Degree	300	2 years	1 year	9 years
Foundation Degree	240	2 years	1 year	6 years
Diploma of Higher Education	240	2 years	1 year	6 years
Higher National Diploma	240	2 years	1 year	6 years
Higher National Certificate	120	1 year	1 year	3 years
	OR 150/160	OR 2 years		OR 4 years
Certificate of Higher Education	120	1 year		3 years
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education	120	1 year		3 years
Top-up degree	120	1 year		3 years
Top-up degree (<i>intensive route</i>)	120	8 months		3 years
Postgraduate Taught				
Master's Degree	180	1 year	6 months	5 years
Top-up degree	60 or 80	6 months		3 years
Postgraduate Diploma	120	6 months		3 years
Postgraduate Certificate	60	3 months		3 years
Postgraduate Certificate in Education	180	1 year		3 years
Diploma in Management Studies	120	1 year		3 years

Section 3 – Structure and Assessment of Taught Programmes

3.1 Programme and module design and development

- 1 To exercise the University's responsibilities, Senate shall adopt and maintain procedures for the approval, amendment and regular review of programmes. Such procedures will involve members from other institutions of higher education or the professions and will require that regard has been paid to:
 - The curriculum and syllabus including any arrangements for practical training and experience.
 - The qualifications and experience of the teaching staff.
 - The facilities available.
 - The standard required for admission.
 - The quality of teaching.
 - The currency of knowledge and best practice.
 - The requirements of the student target group.
 - The goals and strategic plans of the institution.
 - The quality of placements or work-based learning.
 - The achievement of the students.
 - The arrangements for student assessment and for the appointment of external and internal examiners.
 - The arrangements for monitoring, sustaining and developing both the standard of the student performance and the quality of learning and teaching.
 - The standard and systems required for the allocation of awards or credits to students.
- 2 University programmes of study will have stated aims and objectives which the curriculum, structure, teaching methods and forms of assessment are designed to fulfil. The aims and objectives of University programmes of study will be broadly comparable with those associated with similar programmes of study in UK Institutions of Higher Education.
- 3 University programmes of study are made up of a number of modules that are pieced together to form a coherent whole. A module is a discrete block of study leading to specified learning outcomes which are assessed. Modules must be distinct in terms of title, aims, learning outcomes and content.
- 4 Modules are allocated credit points based on the notional amount of student learning time, with one credit equating to 10 notional learning hours. These learning hours will be allocated to tasks depending on the nature of the module – taught content, independent study, assessment and other activities.

Modules are also allocated to a level of the FHEQ.

- 5 Module size must be expressed in multiples of 10 credits with the smallest being 10 credits and the largest 80 credits. In exceptional circumstances approval may be given to a zero credit-rated module¹⁰.
- 6 Module level is demonstrated by the learning outcomes and the assessment, which will reflect the broad parameters of the distinguishing features of generic level descriptors.
- 7 Modules contributing to any given award(s) will be denoted either as compulsory or designated. Modules may also be approved as stand-alone modules. Modules may be pre-requisites or co-requisites for another module. As a requirement of all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, the principal module (dissertation, project or equivalent) is a compulsory module at Level 6 or Level 7 and cannot be discounted from the algorithm for classification.
- 8 Each module must be passed individually to achieve the stipulated credit, except as specified in 3.7.13 (condonement).
- 9 Modules at adjacent levels may be delivered jointly, via shared learning, if there is a strong academic rationale and demonstrable benefits to the student learning experience. However, separate and differentiated module specifications will be required for the different levels.
- 10 Joint Honours students will normally study modules to a value of 60 credits in each subject at Level 4. These modules will also normally be included as compulsory or designated on the relevant single honours award maps.
- 11 Single Honours undergraduate students will normally study compulsory modules to a value of 120 credits at Level 4. Programmes with approval to include designated modules at Level 4 are listed in the supplementary regulations.
- 12 Students may learn on or off campus, including in collaboration with another organisation, workplace or elsewhere, and/or wholly online (i.e. via distance learning). The standard mode of delivery for on campus provision is Active Blended Learning. A range of modes of study may be employed to deliver programmes, which must be clearly articulated in programme and module

¹⁰ At Undergraduate level colleagues are advised that 30 credit modules can create challenges with certain aspects of the Regulations, including the application of condonement and the ability to repeat a failed module alongside modules at a higher level in future years of study.

documentation. A programme validated for delivery using one mode of study cannot be taught using another mode of study without a change of approval.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies must take account of the way in which the programme will be delivered. This may necessitate different approaches to teaching, learning and assessment across different modes.

- 13 The University acknowledges that it has agreed to provide a programme of study to students who have accepted an offer and then enrolled onto that programme. It will endeavour not to vary that programme substantially nor to cease its delivery where there are offer holders or current students. Where circumstances are such that there is a requirement to vary the programme substantially, the approval of offer holders and current students to the changes will be sought. Where circumstances are such that there is a requirement to cease delivery of a programme, contingency plans will be put in place to support offer holders and current students to find alternative provision. Further information on this can be found in the University's policy on amending and cancelling programmes of study and in the University's Student Protection Plan.
- 14 All modules are listed in the postgraduate and undergraduate module catalogues. Modules are offered subject to the constraints of the timetable, the availability of specialist staff and any restrictions on the number of students who may be taught on a particular module. Modules will not necessarily be offered every year.
- 15 The content, learning outcomes and assessment strategies of modules may change to reflect changes in the discipline, national requirements or specialisms of the associated academic staff. These changes will be subject to the appropriate approval processes.
- 16 The articulation of key skills¹¹ must be made explicit in programme and module specifications, in particular:
 - The employability and changemaker skills outcomes articulated at the appropriate level through learning outcomes
 - How skills will be achieved through the teaching, learning and assessment strategies.
 - Skill progression through levels.
 - Ensuring all pathways through a programme of study contain adequate coverage of key skills.

¹¹ Please see the CHANGE Framework for more information on Key Skills

3.2 Programme and Module Documentation

- 1 Each approved programme of study will be governed by written statements, available to students, called a Programme Specification. A Programme Specification Template can be found as an appendix to these Regulations. The Programme Specification will set out, as a minimum:
 - The title of the programme of study (if any) and the awards to which that leads.
 - The planned duration and mode of study of the programme. If more than one mode of study is possible, these must be clearly differentiated.
- 2 The following should be the same regardless of the mode of delivery:
 - The aims and objectives of the programme.
 - Learning Outcomes for the programme of study and any intermediate awards for which the student would be eligible
 - The regulations governing admission, progression and assessment.
- 3 The following should be the same regardless of the mode of study, or should be deemed comparable during programme validation and/or change of approval processes:
 - The curriculum and structure of the programme of study
 - The assessment type(s) and structure of the assessments
- 4 The Programme Specification will not be changed after initial approval without reference to the procedures as approved by Senate. Any interim changes in assessment and progression regulations will additionally involve formal communication with the students on the programme who might be directly affected by the proposal. The Change of Approval Handbook and the Policy on Amending and Cancelling Programmes of Study indicate the level of approval required for such changes.
- 5 Each approved programme of study will have an Award Map, a definitive statement of the modules which make up a given award for which a student is registered. This forms part of the Programme Specification and any change will be subject to approval processes.

The Award Map specifies the modules which are compulsory or designated for each stage of that award, and details any additional requirements or restrictions. The choice of modules at each stage must comply with the requirements of each award map.

- 6 For non-standard delivery a Delivery Map should also be available for each programme of study.
- 7 Each module is defined by a module specification which identifies the content, teaching and learning pattern, assessment scheme (including all items of assessment and their weighting) and credit (based on learning hours) for the module as well as any pre or co-requisites. Module specifications are written at an academic level which is clearly reflected in the learning outcomes. A Module Specification Template can be found as an appendix to these Regulations.
- 8 Module information is provided for each module, using the NILE template, including the information listed below. If a module is delivered in different modes, this information needs to be explicit on any variation between the approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. Alternatively, separate Module information can be produced for each mode:
 - Learning outcomes
 - Teaching, learning and assessment hours
 - Assessment items and their weightings
 - Module content
 - Reading list
 - Assessment deadlines, including referral/deferral dates
 - Assessment briefs and assessment criteria
 - Contact information
 - Other relevant information

3.3 Duration of Study

- 1 The planned length of a programme will accord with the periods of registration defined in Table 2. Within that framework an individual student may be admitted with exemptions via the APL/credit transfer process.
- 2 At undergraduate level a full time student will normally study 120 credits in each academic year. A student must study at least 100 credits in an academic year to qualify for full time status. Students may study up to 140 credits in an academic year if they have (an) outstanding module(s) that they are required to take to complete the requirements of their award map¹²; in no other circumstances may an undergraduate student study

¹² Normally this would be a situation where a student is required to repeat a module; substitute a previously-taken module for an alternative; where, due to withdrawing from a module or repeating a module in a previous year, the student has credits outstanding in subsequent academic years; or where a student has been admitted with APCL/APEL

more than 120 credits in an academic year. A student will normally study no more than 80 credits in a semester.

- 3 For postgraduate taught study a full-time student will normally study 60 credits in each semester and 180 credits within a calendar year. Students are not permitted to take more than 180 credits in any calendar year.

Where postgraduate taught programmes incorporate a placement opportunity, the length of the programme may differ from the standard length. In such circumstances the programme length will be approved during the validation process.

- 4 Principal modules, including those incorporating research methods, are subject to the following maximum timescales. Work submitted early will not be processed or ratified early:

- Full time students – two semesters from the point of enrolment on the module.
- Part time students – three semesters from the point of enrolment on the module.

- 5 It should be noted that students studying off-site or via independent distance learning will be considered to be studying part time, and therefore eligible to three semesters from the point of enrolment on the module, unless it is agreed at the point of validation and/or change of approval to consider those students as full-time students due to the nature of delivery of that provision¹³.

- 6 A student may change from part-time to full-time study and from full-time to part-time study at any appropriate point in their programme of study provided that they are still able to complete within the maximum period of registration¹⁴.

- 7 A student cannot begin to study a module after the end of the third week of teaching¹⁵. A student is permitted to withdraw themselves from a programme of study at any time except when their grades are being processed for Module Boards and an Award and Status Board. A student who wishes to withdraw during that time period may submit their

credits that do not equate to a full year of study. This is dependent on timetabling restrictions.

¹³ If approved, this will be written into a Supplementary Regulation and will apply to all students on that programme

¹⁴ Those students on a Student Visa must note that part-time study is not allowed under the terms of the Student Visa

¹⁵ Where modules are delivered in an intensive format, this period of time may be reduced in liaison with the Academic Registrar.

withdrawal request, but this will not be processed until after the relevant Award and Status Board. If the Award and Status Board has approved termination of studies this will then override the withdrawal request. Students are not permitted to withdraw from studies to avoid Termination of Studies due to academic failure.

- 8 A student who completes enrolment or re-enrolment and does not engage with their studies by the end of the fourth week of the semester and/or their engagement is low, will be contacted and may be withdrawn. In addition, a student who fails to engage across all assessments within the first semester of a year of study without good cause and due notice will be deemed to have withdrawn from the programme and their registration will be terminated by the University. A student can be withdrawn at any point in the academic year if there are reasonable grounds to do so, at the discretion of the Academic Registrar.

Further information is given in the Transfer, Restart and Withdrawal Policy and Engagement policy.

- 9 A student may be withdrawn from their programme of study if they have been found culpable of a Stage 2 disciplinary offence through the Student Disciplinary Policy and have no or minimal levels of engagement with their programme of study. Further information is given in the Transfer, Restart and Withdrawal Policy and the Student Disciplinary Policy.

3.4 Principles of Assessment

- 1 The University's assessment regulations state the basis on which students will be assessed for an award and form the basis of maintaining standards. These regulations cover all assessments, at whatever point in the programme they are to be undertaken, which formally relate to the progression of students from one stage of the programme to another or which contribute to the recommendation of an award.

Some programmes may also have supplementary regulations that govern the assessment of aspects of their programme.

- 2 All programmes of study have an assessment scheme, developed according to the assessment regulations and any supplementary regulations, that reflects the aims and objectives of the programme, the standard of the award, its mode of delivery and any special assessment requirements associated with the award. Assessment schemes may vary depending on

the mode of delivery; however, any variation in assessment schemes between modes of delivery must be approved during the normal validation and/or change of approval processes.

- 3 The University Assessment and Feedback Policy and associated documents provide guidance to programme designers about assessment design and must be used during programme development. This will include guidance on developing approaches to learning, teaching and assessment for different modes of study.
- 4 Assessment must enable the learning outcomes to be demonstrated.
- 5 Each module will be designed with an assessment strategy which is consistent and clearly related to its learning outcomes, the teaching and learning strategy, the level of the module (4-8) and its mode of delivery. This must be approved at validation and included as part of the module description. It should include details of formative assessment and will be explained to students in the module information provided on NILE.

Assessment strategies should be devised to be appropriate for the module and mode of delivery whilst set within a structure that encourages parity between modules.

- 6 The expectation is that the assessment makes up one quarter of the notional learning hours of a module.

Students should be informed of the assessment regulations and scheme for a programme at the outset of study.

- 7 Unless an exemption has been granted, all assessments will be submitted electronically using the Submitting and Grading Online (SAGE) system. Assessments submitted in this way will be subject to anti-plagiarism detection software. Those with an exemption will be submitted to the Student Desk.
- 8 Assessments will be marked and moderated according to the Assessment and Feedback Policy and associated documents.

3.5 Assessing Modules

- 1 The language of instruction and assessment for all programmes of study leading to an award of the University of Northampton is English unless otherwise approved by Senate. Examples of such exceptions are:

- The subject of the programme of study is another language;

- Students transferring certificated prior learning in certain circumstances;
- The intended learning outcomes of a professional practice element of a programme can only be achieved through the medium of another language. In this case the non-English language component must comprise 25% or less of the programme, the principal module must be submitted in English and arrangements must be made for the scripts to be moderated in English.

This list is not exhaustive.

- 2 Any specific attendance requirements which detail attendance required for prescribed parts of the curriculum of an individual programme of study will be approved as part of a validation/Change of Approval process and published in the programme specification and relevant module specifications. Such specific attendance requirements will not normally be approved unless there is an external (e.g. PSRB) obligation for a certain level or type of attendance to be achieved.

Additional attendance requirements are present for students studying on a Student Visa for the University to meet its Home Office obligations¹⁶.

- 3 All items of assessment are graded according to the grade criteria.
- 4 The overall grade for the module is determined from the weighted grades for the individual items of assessment as outlined in Tables 3 and 4.

Item level		Aggregate/module level		
Letter Grade	Numerical scale ¹⁷	Points band	Letter Grade	ECTS Grade ¹⁸
A+	25	24.00-30.00	A+	Pass
A	23	22.00-23.99	A	Pass
A-	21	20.50-21.99	A-	Pass
B+	20	19.50-20.49	B+	Pass
B	19	18.50-19.49	B	Pass
B-	18	17.50-18.49	B-	Pass
C+	17	16.50-17.49	C+	Pass
C	16	15.50-16.49	C	Pass
C-	15	14.50-15.49	C-	Pass
F+	14	13.00-14.49	F+	Fail
F	11.5	9.00-12.99	F	Fail
F-	6	3.00-8.99	F-	Fail
LG	0	0.00-2.99	G	Fail

¹⁶ From February 2009, to meet Home Office visa requirements, the University is required to report absence from study by students on Student visas of more than 10 working days without the University's reasonably granted permission. All Student Visa students must follow the University's procedures for monitoring their attendance to comply with this

¹⁷ This scale is out of 30

¹⁸ A student earning a 'Pass' at an EU institution would earn at least a C- on the UN scale

Item level		Aggregate/module level		
Letter Grade	Numerical scale ¹⁷	Points band	Letter Grade	ECTS Grade ¹⁸
NG	0	0.00-2.99	G	Fail
AG	0	0.00-2.99	G	Fail
G	0	0.00-2.99	G	Fail

Table 3: Postgraduate Grading Scheme

Item level		Aggregate/module level		
Letter Grade	Numerical scale ¹⁹	Points band	Letter Grade	ECTS Grade
A+	25	24.00-30.00	A+	A
A	23	22.00-23.99	A	A
A-	21	20.50-21.99	A-	A
B+	20	19.50-20.49	B+	B
B	19	18.50-19.49	B	B
B-	18	17.50-18.49	B-	B
C+	17	16.50-17.49	C+	C
C	16	15.50-16.49	C	C
C-	15	14.50-15.49	C-	C
D+	14	13.50-14.49	D+	D
D	13	12.50-13.49	D	D
D-	12	11.50-12.49	D-	D/E ²⁰
F+	11	9.50-11.49	F+	F/FX ²¹
F	8	6.00-9.49	F	F
F-	4	2.00-5.99	F-	F
LG	0	0.00-1.99	G	G
NG	0	0.00-1.99	G	G
AG	0	0.00-1.99	G	G
G	0	0.00-1.99	G	G

Table 4: Undergraduate Grading Scheme

- 5 To pass a module a student is required to obtain a mean grade of a bare pass or above on aggregate when all items of assessment have been considered together in the manner stated in the module specification. The grade for the module is determined using a calculation derived from the weighted grades for the individual items of assessment.

- 6 A student who passes a module with an outstanding assessment opportunity (pass refer/defer) can undertake that outstanding assessment(s) in order to improve the module grade. Apart from this there is no provision to repeat modules already passed, including those graded at E.

¹⁹ This scale is out of 30

²⁰ The ECTS grade of 'E' means that the work has met the minimum criteria

²¹ The ECTS grade of FX means that the work has not met the minimum criteria and that more work is required

- 7 A bare pass is considered as a D- for undergraduates and a C- for postgraduate taught students. Any variation to this requirement to achieve a certain minimum grade in an individual item(s) of assessment requires a supplementary regulation.
- 8 An E grade refers to a condoned fail. Fail grades are graded as F+, F, F-, LG, NG, AG or G. LG refers to an assessment that was submitted but outside the timeframes allowed for marking. NG refers to an assessment that was submitted but contained nothing of merit. AG refers to an assessment that was submitted but was awarded a G following a decision of an Academic Misconduct Panel. G refers to a non submission.
- 9 Grades obtained following a referral or deferral for that year are final. There is no further (third) opportunity to submit/sit any item of assessment.
- 10 All assignments must be submitted by the due deadline as published in the module guides.
- 11 At first attempt of assessments not including examinations, and in situations where a student cannot meet the deadline due to illness or other circumstances beyond their control, they may seek an extension to the deadline of up to two weeks. This will be managed according to the Extension Policy and Procedure. Extensions will not normally be given to students for circumstances that should have been anticipated. Extensions should normally be requested prior to the deadline but may be considered after the deadline if the circumstances warrant it.

In situations where an extension of up to two weeks is insufficient, a deferral to the next assessment opportunity may be requested through the Mitigating Circumstances policy and procedure (see Regulation 3.10).

- 12 Where work has not been granted an extension for the first submission but is submitted late, the following grades will be awarded:
 - Submitted late but within 7 days of deadline – maximum grade of a bare pass
 - Submitted more than 7 days after the deadline – 'LG' grade
- 13 At the second assessment opportunity no extensions or late submissions are available. No extensions are available for examinations. Work submitted after the due date will be awarded a 'LG' grade. A student can still apply for a deferral via the Mitigating Circumstances policy and procedure (See Regulation 3.10).

- 14 A student who attends an examination or submits an assessment declares themselves 'fit to sit' and cannot afterwards submit a claim for Mitigating Circumstances.

3.6 Examinations

- 1 Regulations governing the conduct of students in examinations have been established to ensure that all students are treated fairly and equally during examinations (see guidance for good conduct in examinations).
- 2 Students are expected to be available to sit examinations throughout the entire examination period, which will be published in advance. Students who are required to resit an examination are also expected to be available for the entire resit examination period.
- 3 Where necessary, special examination arrangements are made for students with declared disabilities or those registered with additional needs.

3.7 Progression

- 1 To continue studying in the next academic year a student must be in a position to complete the qualification for which they are registered within the maximum registration period, taking account of any pre-requisites and other registration requirements, and must not have breached the accumulated fail regulations (see 3.7.2).
- 2 A student will be withdrawn from further study if they have taken and failed, having exhausted all opportunities for re-assessment, modules to the value of:
 - More than 60 credits at Level 3 (Integrated Foundation Year); or
 - More than 80 credits at Level 4; or
 - More than 60 credits at Level 5; or
 - More than 60 credits at Level 6²²; or
 - More than 40 credits at Level 7;

Students who have commenced a subsequent semester of study prior to confirmation of results from the previous semester do so in the knowledge that they will be withdrawn immediately should results from the previous semester lead to a breach of this accumulated failure count.

²² Where Level 6 study comprises a module worth 80 credits the accumulated fail regulation will only be actioned when a student fails credits worth more than 80 credits.

Modules failed due to mitigating circumstances will be treated differently (see Regulation 3.10).

3. A student will be notified of their non-engagement if they do not engage with their studies by the end of the fourth week of the semester, and/or their engagement is low, and may be withdrawn. A student will be withdrawn for their non-engagement if there is no engagement across all their assessments within the first semester of each academic year of study. More information is available in the Student Engagement Policy.

4 To progress to the next stage at undergraduate level a student must achieve the credits as specified in accordance with the award map for the programme.

Where a student is repeating modules, a mixed programme of studies may be undertaken to achieve sufficient credits at a given level, provided that such a programme complies with the award map, that credits are studied in level order and that no more than 20 level 4 credits are studied alongside Level 6 provision.

In other situations, where students are studying the modules at the lower levels for the first time, a mixed programme of studies may be undertaken to achieve sufficient credits at a given level, provided that such a programme complies with the award map and that no more than 20 Level 4 credits are studied alongside Level 6 provision.

5 As an exception to 3.7.4 above, students who are studying the Level 3 year of an Honours Degree with an Integrated Foundation Year are not permitted to progress to Level 4 until they have passed all 120 credits at Level 3.

6 The requirement for level 4 may be waived for a subject in which pre-requisites do not prevent direct entry into Level 5.

7 A student who attempts and fails, or does not submit, an assessment item has the right to resubmit/resit that item on one further occasion, except where students have their resit/resubmission rights removed as a result of academic misconduct. Second opportunities for non-examination assessments are held in-year according to set dates; fixed dates also exist for second examination opportunities. Resubmissions will be processed and ratified in accordance with published dates.

8 Any item achieving a pass following a standard resubmission/resit receives a maximum grade of a bare pass. If a student does not achieve a pass standard at resubmission/resit of an item, the appropriate fail grade is

awarded. If a student does not resubmit/resit an item of assessment following failure the original grade stands.

- 9 Reassessment of a previously passed item to improve the grade is not allowed.
- 10 When a student has submitted an item of assessment or attempted an examination on more than one occasion, the higher grade achieved will be awarded.
- 11 The deadline for an item of assessment that is deferred due to Mitigating Circumstances, will be stipulated and will normally be the next assessment opportunity.
- 12 A student who has no further deferral or referral right in a module may be permitted to repeat the module on a maximum of two occasions, provided the accumulated fail regulation has not been breached (3.7.2). Each failure of a module contributes to the accumulated fail count. Modules failed due to mitigating circumstances may be treated differently (see regulation 3.10)²³.
- 13 A student who successfully passes modules amounting to 100 credits at level 4 and has an F+ in one or two modules amounting to no more than 20 credits in total will be awarded a condoned fail (an E grade). The same regulation applies where a student successfully passes modules amounting to 100 credits at level 5, and has an F+ in one or two modules amounting to no more than 20 credits in total. This will only be applied once a stage has been completed. Condonement is not permitted at levels 6 or 7 or for students studying Level 3 modules as part of the Integrated Foundation Year.
- 14 Where a student's profile incorporates two possible progression/award decisions, including termination due to accumulated fail and award, or termination as a result of accumulated fail and progression, the better of the two decisions prevails.

3.8 Transfers, Restarts and Withdrawals

Transfers

²³ Students who are required to repeat a module may be charged an additional fee for that module. Students should contact the Finance Office who can advise on the level of any additional fee and the mechanisms through which they can be paid. Students who do not pay the additional fee/set up a payment plan with Finance for the payment of that additional fee will not be eligible to take up the repeat module opportunity.

- 1 Students may request to transfer programme within the first two teaching weeks of commencement of study.
- 2 Students may also be able to transfer to a different programme of study following successful completion of a semester of study or a full level of study. Further details can be found in the Transfer, Restart and Withdrawal Policy.
- 3 Transfers for students undertaking Level 3 of a programme incorporating Foundation will be permitted as per the *Transfer Procedure for students on a Programme Incorporating Foundation*, appended to the Transfer, Restart and Withdrawal Policy.
- 4 Transfers of any other nature, at any other time, are not normally permitted. Any exception to this requires approval by the Academic Registrar or nominee.
- 5 Any student who wishes to change programmes outside the options listed in 3.8.1/3.8.2/3.8.3 must withdraw and re-apply to the University for consideration to commence studies the following academic year.

Restarts

- 6 A student who has valid extenuation to explain extensive failure across Level 4 of a programme of study or across Level 3 of a programme incorporating foundation may submit a request to restart that same programme the following year.
- 7 Restarts of all other levels are only permitted in exceptional circumstances related to extreme mitigating circumstances.
- 8 A student may also request to restart on a different programme of study.
- 9 Only one restart is permitted and requests for a restart must normally be submitted prior to the deadline provided to students. This deadline is published centrally annually and is set at the point prior to the end of year Module Boards. Restart requests cannot be approved after the Module Boards in any circumstances. Where a restart is requested after the completion of Semester 1 and where credits have been achieved a student may be counselled to take a study break instead.
- 10 Further information can be found in the Transfer, Restart and Withdrawal Policy.

Withdrawal

- 11 A student who is terminated due to academic failure and wishes to apply to study on a different programme at the University cannot do so until a period of two years from the point of termination has elapsed. In no circumstances is a former student eligible to reapply to study on a programme from which they were previously terminated.
- 12 A student is permitted to withdraw themselves from a programme of study at any time except when their grades are being processed for Module Boards and an Award and Status Board.
- 13 A student who withdraws from a programme of study prior to the restart deadline may reapply to commence that or a different programme of study the following academic year. In all other situations, a student who withdraws is not eligible to commence that or a different programme of study until a period of at least 12 months has elapsed from the date of withdrawal.
- 14 A student will be withdrawn for non-engagement. The grounds for withdrawals due to non-engagement can be found in the Student Engagement Policy
- 15 A student is only deemed to have withdrawn once the appropriate documentation has been completed and the student's status has been adjusted on the Student Records System.
- 16 Please see the Transfer, Restart and Withdrawal Policy for more information.

3.9 Publication of results

- 1 The Academic Registrar or nominee is responsible for the publication to all UON students of all module results and all decisions on student continuation and/or achievement. No other member of staff is authorised to release such results or decisions unless Senate has agreed otherwise.
- 2 Provisional, internally-moderated grades for individual items of assessment and overall modules are normally made available to students individually²⁴.
- 3 Students are provided with final results and decisions on achievement, including conferment of awards or termination of studies, in writing after the relevant Award Board. These are sent to the email address on the

²⁴ Results can be accessed via the MyNorthampton app.

student record system²⁵. Results on progression and continuation are provided to students online, along with online guidance on the implications of these.

- 4 Where it is necessary to communicate results and/or decisions on an official University notice board the provisions of the 2018 Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation will be observed.
- 5 Where a student chooses to withdraw from the University and has achieved the requirements for an intermediate award they will be provided with the documentation associated with that intermediate award. A student who chooses to withdraw from the University who has not achieved the requirements for an intermediate award (including those who withdraw following successful completion of the Level 3 component of a programme incorporating foundation) may request a student results letter from the Student Information Desk.

3.10 Non-standard assessment matters

Disability

- 1 To ensure reasonable adjustment is made, Senate shall establish and maintain procedures to provide alternative means of assessment for students who, through disability, cannot be assessed by the standard methods. These procedures will ensure that these assessments are appropriate for the learning outcomes of the module and programme and that consideration is given to equality of treatment between all students on the programme.

Mitigating Circumstances

- 2 Senate shall establish and maintain procedures to assist students affected by mitigating circumstances. These are set out in the Mitigating Circumstances Policy. Mitigating circumstances are never used to adjust properly determined assessment outcomes.
- 3 Mitigating Circumstances are defined as circumstances that are serious, unpredictable and unavoidable.
- 4 A request for mitigating circumstances should normally be made prior to the assessment deadline or prior to the start of the examination. Documentary evidence must be provided to support the request in accordance with the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure.

²⁵ A student must ensure the University has their current and accurate email address on the system

- 5 Grades for assessments where mitigating circumstances have been accepted will be managed as follows:
- Within an academic year, there are two opportunities to complete an assessment. Students who are unable to take an assessment at the first opportunity due to mitigating circumstances can apply to defer to the second opportunity. Where mitigating circumstances are accepted at first opportunity the assessment is classed as deferred. If the work is then submitted at the second opportunity, the grade will not be capped.
 - Where a student has had mitigating circumstances at both opportunities, and fails the module as a result, will the failure be disregarded from the accumulated fail count (regulation 3.7.2) and from the number of opportunities a student has to repeat a module (regulation 3.7.12).
- 6 Only where a student has had mitigating circumstances for a missed assessment, and fails the module as a result, will this failure be disregarded from the accumulated fail count (regulation 3.7.2) and from the number of opportunities a student has to repeat a module (regulation 3.7.12).
- 7 Further information on mitigating circumstances can be found in the Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure.

Study Breaks

- 9 If circumstances such as illness or personal circumstances are causing severe disruption to a student's studies they should consider taking a study break.
- 10 Study break periods count towards the maximum registration period a student has to complete their programme (see Regulation 2.2.7). All credit and failures achieved to the date of the break are carried forwards.
- 11 A study break is normally for a maximum period of one year. If students are not able to return at the end of this time they will be required to withdraw. Normally only one study break per programme of study can be taken.
- 12 Evidence of extenuating circumstances is required in order for a break from studies to be approved for Postgraduate students who have enrolled on their principle module.

13 Further information on study breaks can be found in the Study Break Policy.

Academic Misconduct

14 Academic misconduct includes various behaviours such as, but not limited to, cheating, collusion, plagiarism and contract cheating.

15 Senate looks gravely upon all academic misconduct and is empowered to recommend severe sanctions for students who are found guilty of academic misconduct.

16 There may be situations where academic misconduct is proven after the award of a degree. In such circumstances, it is possible that the sanctions awarded due to that academic misconduct may lead to a degree being rescinded. Any such circumstances will be overseen by the University's Award and Status Board.

17 Further information on academic misconduct, including full definitions and a list of possible sanctions, can be found in the Academic Misconduct and Integrity Policy and associated guidance on Academic Misconduct and Integrity.

Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards

18 An aegrotat award is an award that can be given when the Assessment Board does not have sufficient evidence of the student's performance to be able to recommend the award on which the student was enrolled but is satisfied that, but for illness or other valid cause, the student would have reached the standard required. The student, if able to do so, must signify that they are willing to accept the award.

19 Except with posthumous awards (see 3.10.20), aegrotat awards are only given at the level at which the student was studying; in other words, and provided the conditions in regulation 3.10.18 above are met:

- A student who studied up to level 4 credits will be eligible for a Certificate of Higher Education
- A student who studied up to level 5 credits will be eligible for a Diploma of Higher Education
- A student who studied up to level 6 credits will be eligible for a Bachelor's Degree (with or without honours).
- A student who studied up to level 7 credits will be eligible for a Master's Degree

- 20 Posthumous awards are a type of aegrotat awards. These may be awarded to a student whose academic performance indicates the probability that the student would have achieved their final award if they had completed their studies. Posthumous awards may be given for the final award, or for an intermediate award for a student who had not completed sufficient Level 4 and Level 5 credits. Posthumous awards will not normally be classified-
- 21 Some programmes may specifically exclude the award of an aegrotat degree and this will be stated within the Programme Specification.

Section 4 – Assessment of Standards of Assessment Processes

4.1 Internal Examiners

- 1 Internal Examiners' judgement is applied at the item level. Processes of moderation ensure that the assessment criteria are rigorously and consistently applied to all work submitted for assessment. These academic judgements cannot be questioned or overturned: there is no process of appeal against academic judgement.
- 2 Item level outcomes are combined via published weightings to produce overall module outcomes. The Assessment Board confirms the accuracy of item level outcomes and the applied weightings. Where exceptional circumstances apply, the Board is empowered to override outcomes provided all members of a cohort are treated equally and fairly.
- 3 The Academic Registrar is involved in the process to ensure:
 - University-wide consistency;
 - sound academic justification is provided;
 - the relevant external examiner supports the process.

4.2 External Examiners

- 1 Procedures exist for the appointment of external examiners. Such procedures ensure that those appointed to the post of external examiner:
 - have an appropriate academic background;
 - are independent of the University;
 - can ensure the standards achieved by students are comparable to those in other UK universities.
- 2 Codes of practice and guidance exist to enable external examiners to be fully informed about their role and responsibilities, relevant University procedures and the area of responsibility to which they are appointed. These enable an external examiner, where appropriate to their level of responsibility, to:
 - moderate the work of the internal examiners;
 - satisfy themselves that the work and decisions of the Assessment Board are consistent with good practice in UK universities;
 - ensure that students are treated equitably and within the regulations;
 - ensure that the standards of the award are consistent with those conferred by other UK universities;
 - report independently of the rest of the Assessment Board to the Vice Chancellor.

4.3 Assessment Boards

- 1 All Assessment Boards have a Constitution, Terms of Reference and Procedures which provide for:
 - the inclusion of external examiners amongst the membership of the Board.
 - the provision of a trained and impartial chair.
 - the exclusion of students from membership of the Board.

These are documented in 5.3.5-5.3.18 below.

- 2 Senate, delegated to the Chair of the Award and Status Board, may only receive recommendations for the conferment of an award from a properly constituted and conducted Assessment Board. The decisions of a properly constituted and conducted Assessment Board may not be overturned by any other body, except due to a student complaint or appeal or a late Mitigating Circumstances outcome.
- 3 Detailed and accurate written records of the proceedings of each Assessment Board are retained. To that end, an officer to each Board is appointed by the Academic Registrar.
- 4 The dates for the meetings of the Assessment Boards are set at the start of the academic year to ensure full attendance at each Board.

Module Boards

- 5 All those involved in operating within a framework context must be familiar with the range and limits of responsibilities for that tier so that they can guide internal and external colleagues accordingly.
- 6 All Module Assessment Boards oversee the assessment of modules, and confirm grades for all students studying modules within a given Field.
- 7 The constitution of the Module Board is:
 - Chair
 - Module External Examiner(s)
 - Subject Leader(s) (where relevant)
 - Dean of Faculty (ex-officio)
 - Module Leaders- for all modules to be considered
 - All academic staff contributing to the teaching and assessment of students registered for modules to be considered
 - All practice/fieldwork teachers contributing to the assessment of students
 - Officer appointed by the Academic Registrar.

- 8 The Terms of Reference are: Within the terms of approved module specifications to be responsible for the approval of all forms of assessment used in modules to be considered:
- To approve the grades awarded to each student for modules under consideration;
 - To advise Programme Teams on:
 - the nature, appropriateness and conduct of forms of assessment;
 - The standards set and the standards achieved;
 - The performance of students.
- 9 In exercising the powers set out above, the Module Assessment Board shall:
- Scrutinise the grades relating to each module, including the information on average grade and range to identify any anomaly or other cause for concern. This includes scrutinising consistency in standards achieved across sites of delivery where modules are collaborative;
 - Identify any anomaly or cause for concern for investigation by the Officer (which may lead to Chair's Action following the Board);
 - Confirm a recommendation to the Award and Status Board for each student in relation to each module
- 10 In addition, determine for those students who have an outstanding opportunity at item(s) of assessment the requirements for referred and deferred assessments.
- 11 Recommendations to the Award and Status Board include:
- **Passed:** Confirms that a student has achieved an overall grade of D- or more at Levels Foundation and 4-6 or a C- at Level 7, for the module, and has satisfied any relevant supplementary regulations and that credit will be assigned. In the case of modules requiring thresholds of achievement to meet professional body requirements, an additional category 'Passed for Professional Purposes' may be assigned.
 - **Deferred:** Confirms that a student has not achieved an overall module grade of D- or more at Levels Foundation and 4-6 or a C- at Level 7, and/or has failed to satisfy supplementary regulations but has one or more items of assessment for which Mitigating Circumstances have been upheld.
 - **Referred:** Confirms that a student has not achieved a grade of a bare pass on aggregate for the module, and/or has failed to satisfy any relevant supplementary regulations but has an outstanding opportunity for assessment on one or more items.
 - **Pass Refer:** Confirms that a student has achieved a pass on aggregate for the module but has an outstanding opportunity for referral on one or more items of assessment.
 - **Pass Defer:** Confirms that a student has achieved a pass on aggregate for the module but has an outstanding opportunity for deferral on one or more items of assessment.

- **Failed:** Confirms that a student has not achieved an overall module grade of D- or more at Levels Foundation and 4-6 or a C- at Level 7, and/or has failed to satisfy any relevant supplementary regulations and they are not eligible for deferral or referral of any item.
- **Not attempted:** Confirms that a student has not submitted any work and/or attempted the examination, has submitted nothing of merit, has submitted after the deadline for submission and the deadline for achievement of a bare pass, or has received a non-submission grade as a result of academic misconduct.

Award and Status Boards

- 12 Award and Status Boards oversee the assessment of awards; determine, for each student, their continuation or progression status from one stage of an award to the next; and make recommendations to Senate on the award and class of award to be conferred on individual students, or recommendations for termination of studies. Senate has delegated its power to confer degrees and to terminate students' studies to the Chair of the Award and Status Board.
- 13 The Constitution of the Award and Status Board is:
- Chair
 - Principal or Framework External Examiner(s)
 - Assessment, Ceremonies and Examinations Manager
 - Deans of each Faculty or their nominees
 - Representatives of Joint Honours and Integrated Foundation Year provision where relevant
 - Officer appointed by the Academic Registrar
- 14 The Terms of Reference are: Within the terms of the Framework regulations for assessment, progression and awards, to be responsible for:
- The confirmation of decisions concerning the continuation or progression of individual students from one stage of an award to the next where appropriate, based upon the grades from the Module Boards and the application of the Regulations and any relevant supplementary regulations.
 - Ratification of the conferment of awards and for students based on the grades from the Module Boards and the application of Regulations and any relevant supplementary regulations. To advise the University on:
 - The conduct and processes of Assessment Boards.
 - The performance and achievements of students, including across sites of delivery.
- 15 In exercising the powers set out above, the Award and Status Board shall:
- Determine whether a student may continue or gain an award within the terms set by any supplementary regulations relating to the requirements of professional bodies or periods of work experience/placement.

- For students studying modules at level 4 and 5 confirm condonement of F+ grades in accordance with the regulation governing condonement (3.7.13) (unless prohibited by supplementary regulations);
- Confirm decisions forwarded from Module Boards with respect to referred and deferred assessments;
- Confirm a decision for each student in relation to overall performance

16 Decisions in relation to overall performance include:

- **Award and Class:** Confirms that a student has met the requirements for an award and a class has been determined according to the approved regulations, following, as appropriate, completion of the programme, withdrawal or termination.
- **Progress:** Confirms that a student has met the requirements for completion of the stage or modules for which they are enrolled and may continue.
- **Progress carrying module(s)** confirms that the student may progress/ continue on the award, carrying forward a requirement to satisfy the credits as outlined in Table 1 and the requirements of the Award Map.
- **Deferred:** confirms that a student has not been awarded sufficient credit to meet the requirements for progression, continuation or for the recommendation of an award because of mitigating circumstances, and will have a further opportunity to complete assessments.
- **Referred:** confirms that a student has not been awarded sufficient credit to meet the requirements for progression, continuation or for the recommendation of an award, and will have a further opportunity to complete referred assessments for a capped outcome.
- **Pass Refer:** confirms that a student has achieved a pass on aggregate for the module but has an outstanding opportunity for referral on one or more items of assessment.
- **Pass Defer:** confirms that a student has achieved a pass on aggregate for the module but has an outstanding opportunity for deferral on one or more items of assessment.
- **Repeat module(s):** confirms that a student may not continue on their programme of studies towards an award or be recommended for the award, but may be permitted to retake modules (or take substitute modules) by attendance at classes and completing all assessments afresh, in order to meet the requirements for progression, continuation or for recommendation of the award, or to meet the requirements for an alternative award of the University.
- **Fail:** confirms that a student may not continue to study for the named award for which they are registered, but may be considered for transfer to another award of the University. This decision may apply where a student fails to meet the requirements set by professional bodies, but meets the general requirements for continuation of studies, or where the student cannot retrieve failure to meet the requirements for progression/completion through repeat modules.

- **Terminate:** confirms that a student, following all opportunities for referral and deferral, and for repeat modules, has not met the requirements for progression, continuation or completion and has attempted and failed modules that exceed the level permitted by the regulations (3.7.2). Termination can also occur due to an academic misconduct outcome or a disciplinary process.

Students may have a combination of referrals, deferrals and repeat modules in their profile and may continue part time or on a mixture of levels to do so as set out in regulations 3.3.6 and 3.7.4.

Section 5 – Student Code of Conduct and General Student Regulations

[See Student Code of Conduct](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Level Descriptors and Characteristics

1. LEVEL 7 - MASTER'S DEGREE

Much of the study undertaken for a Master's degree will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show originality in tackling and solving problems. They will have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility, and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

Master's degrees are awarded after completion of taught programmes, programmes of research or a mixture of both. Longer, research-based programmes may lead to the degree of MPhil. The learning outcomes of most Master's programmes are achieved on the basis of study equivalent to at least one full-time calendar year and are taken by graduates with a Bachelor's degree with honours (or equivalent achievement).

Master's degrees are often distinguished from other qualifications at this level (for example, advanced short courses, which often form parts of continuing professional development programmes and lead to postgraduate certificates and/or postgraduate diplomas) by an increased intensity, complexity and density of study. Master's degrees - in comparison to postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas - typically include planned intellectual progression that often includes a synoptic/research or scholarly activity.

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - To evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline.
 - To evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- Deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

- Demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.
- Continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility.
 - Decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations.
 - The independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

The standard of the taught Master's Degree is that expected of a first or second class honours graduate who has successfully completed a programme of study in a field for which prior knowledge and skills have provided an appropriate foundation, at a level demanding more advanced and intensive study than a first Degree which is suitable for the fulfilment of the general educational aims and which includes a compulsory element of advanced independent work.

Programmes of study at Master's level may lead either to the Degree of MA or the Degree of MSc, or to a more closely defined award restricted to certain specific areas of study:

- Master of Business Administration (MBA) – reserved for courses which are focussed on the general principles and functions of management and the development of management skills. Students entering MBA programmes must have appropriate practical experience.
- Master of Laws (LLM) – reserved for studies in the discipline of Law.
- Master of Research (MRes) and Master of Clinical Research (MCLinRes) – reserved for programmes which provide a substantial element of postgraduate training in subject related methods, practice of research/clinical research and appropriate transferable skills not normally offered a standard taught Masters programmes.
- Master of Engineering (MEng) – reserved for programmes which provide a substantial element of postgraduate training in subject related methods, skills and research not normally offered within standard taught master's programmes. While the final outcomes of the qualification meet level 7 expectations in full, such qualifications are often termed integrated master's as an acknowledgement of the additional period of study at lower levels (which typically meets level 6 expectations).
- Master of Business Leadership (MBL) – reserved for programmes which provide a substantial element of postgraduate training in development experience that inspires and engages participants in how to develop their leadership approach and philosophy for the purpose of sustainable development.

2. OTHER LEVEL 7/POSTGRADUATE AWARDS

- Where a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) is awarded as a result of the successful completion of a free-standing programme of study, i.e., when it is not given as an intermediate award on a Master's degree programme, the standard is that expected of a graduate who has successfully completed a programme of study in a field for which prior knowledge or skills have provided an appropriate foundation, at a level demanding more intensive study than a first degree.
- The standard of the Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) is that expected of a graduate who has successfully completed a programme of study in a field for which prior knowledge or skills have provided an appropriate foundation, at a level demanding more intensive study than a first degree. Free-standing Postgraduate Certificates programmes would normally be reserved for the 'conversion' of graduates to another discipline or for adding breadth of experience to the recent graduate.
- The Diploma in Management Studies (DMS) is a post-experience postgraduate Diploma award designed to meet the needs of those individuals who wish to achieve a range of general management knowledge, skills and competence. The DMS is suitable for a variety of candidates with the potential to meet the learning demands of Diploma programmes, including graduates from a variety of disciplines and mature and experienced managers. Entrants would normally be expected to have at least two years management experience. The normal length of the programme would be two years of part-time study.
- The Graduate Diploma in Early Years Practice has been developed to support trainee Early Years Professional with good degrees but little experience with children. Successful students are eligible to apply for Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) validation after completing the Diploma programme
- The Graduate Certificate in Continuing Professional Development in Early Years is a programme offers a flexible mechanism for newly qualified Early Years Professionals to consolidate and extend their learning, supporting continuous practice improvement as well as acting as a bridge to Masters level study. Students can enrol on individual modules or onto the award.

3. LEVEL 6: BACHELOR'S DEGREE WITH HONOURS

The standard of the Bachelor's Degree with Honours is that expected of a student with prior knowledge and skills equivalent to passes in two subjects at A Level supported by passes in three other subjects at GCSE, who has successfully completed a programme of study suitable for the fulfilment of general educational aims and who has demonstrated the capacity for sustained independent and high quality work; the normal length of the programme of study will be three academic years of full-time study or the part-time equivalent.

First Degree programmes will lead to the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (BA), the Degree of Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Laws (LLB), the Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) or the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA).

The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any Bachelor's degree with honours which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor can also be used as a reference point for other Level 6 qualifications, including Bachelor's Degrees, Graduate Diplomas and so on.

Bachelor's Degrees with honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- A systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline.
- An ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline.
- Conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - To devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline.
 - To describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline.
 - An appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge.
 - The ability of to manage their own learning and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example referred research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- Apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to carry out projects.
- Critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution or identify a range of solutions to a problem.
- Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

And holders will have:

- The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - Decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts;
 - The learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

Holders of a Bachelor's Degree with honours will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, the holder will have developed analytical techniques and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many types of employment. The holder of such a qualification will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements and to communicate them effectively.

Holders of a Bachelor's Degree with honours should have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.

Bachelor's Degrees with honours form the largest group of higher education qualifications. Typically, learning outcomes for these programmes would be expected to be achieved on the basis of study equivalent to three full-time academic years and lead to awards with titles such as Bachelor of Arts, BA (Hons) or Bachelor of Science, BSc (Hons). In addition to Bachelor's Degrees at this level are short courses and professional 'conversion' courses, based largely on undergraduate material, and taken usually by those who are already graduates in another discipline, leading to, for example, graduate certificates or graduate diplomas.

4. ORDINARY DEGREE

The standard of the Unclassified Bachelor's Degree is that expected of a student with prior knowledge and skills equivalent to passes in two subjects at A Level supported by passes in three other subjects at GCSE, who has successfully completed a programme of study suitable for the fulfilment of general educational aims; the normal length of the programme will be three academic years of full-time study or equivalent.

5. LEVEL 5: FOUNDATION DEGREE

The award of a Foundation Degree is reserved for provision which is highly vocational in nature. It is a coherent academic and vocational experience in its own right yet is explicitly designed for progression to a focussed range of Honours degrees.

A minimum of one sixth, or 40 credits, of the programme shall be composed of work-based learning and assessment. Each programme shall have entry criteria that demonstrate ability to complete the programme whilst recognising and actively facilitating the entry of those candidates who might not possess formal qualifications.

The Foundation Degree shall enable distinct progression to further study. It shall enable holders of the award to develop key skills for employability, and interact with a body of well-established knowledge related to the vocation in such a way as to be able to analyse and apply the knowledge in circumstances that can readily be anticipated.

The award of Foundation Degree in Arts (FdA) will be reserved for programmes in art and design, the arts, social or business studies.

The award of Foundation Degree in Science (FdSc) will be reserved for programmes substantially based on science, mathematics or their application.

Foundation Degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- Knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed.
- Ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context.
- Knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- Use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis.
- Effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively.
- Undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.

And holders will have:

- The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

The Foundation Degree is an example of a qualification that meets, in full, the expectations of the qualification descriptor. The Foundation Degree will comply with the QAA's Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark.

Holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study, and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field. Holders of qualifications at this level will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

6. OTHER LEVEL 5 QUALIFICATIONS

- **Higher National Diplomas (HNDs)** are work-related (vocational) higher education qualifications designed to give students the skills to put acquired knowledge to effective use in a particular job. The standard of the HND is that expected of a student with prior knowledge and skills equivalent to passes in one subject at 'A' level who has successfully completed a programme of study suitable for the fulfilment of general educational aims equivalent in level to the second year of an Honours Degree. Successful completion of the HND may lead to direct entry to the final year of a related Honours Degree. The normal length of the HND will be two full-time academic years of study or equivalent.
- **Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE):** The standard of the Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE) is that expected of a student with prior knowledge and skills equivalent to passes in two subjects at A Level supported by passes in three other subjects at GCSE who has successfully completed a programme of study suitable for the fulfilment of general educational aims equivalent in level to the first two years of an Honours Degree. The normal length of the programme will be two full-time academic years of study or equivalent.

7. LEVEL 4: CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The standard of the Certificate of Higher Education is that expected of a student with prior knowledge and skills equivalent to passes in two subjects at A level, supported by passes in three other subjects in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) who has successfully completed a programme of study suitable for the fulfilment of general educational aims equivalent in level to the first year of an Honours Degree. The normal length of the programme will be one academic year of full-time study or equivalent.

Certificates of Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- Knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study.

- An ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.

And will be able to:

- Evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work.
- Communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments.
- Undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment.

And holders will have:

- The quality and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.
- Sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject, and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems.
- Ability to communicate accurately

The Certificate of Higher Education may be a first step towards obtaining higher level qualifications.

8. OTHER AWARDS

- **Certificate in Teaching and Learning in the Lifelong Learning Sector :** This programme have been developed to meet the Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) and the Standards and Verification UK (SVUK) requirements for all new entrants to teaching, tutoring and training in the Lifelong Learning Sector and lead to a professional teaching qualification in the Lifelong Learning Sector (QTLS). The Certificate is at Level 5 on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Students studying for either award will do so on a part-time basis over two years.
- **Professional Graduate Certificate in Education: Teaching & Learning in the Lifelong Learning Sector (QTLS):** This programme has been developed to meet the Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) and the Standards and Verification UK (SVUK) requirements for all new entrants to teaching, tutoring and training in the Lifelong Learning Sector and lead to a professional teaching qualification in the Lifelong Learning Sector (QTLS). The Professional Graduate Certificate is at Level 6 of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Students studying for either award will do so on a part-time basis over two years.
- **Diploma in professional studies/practice:** reserved for programmes of study related to specific professions and designed to build on professional qualifications or registration and professional experience. The standard of the

DPS is that expected of a person with a relevant professional qualification and a specified period of professional experience who has successfully completed a programme of professional study at second or third year Honours Degree level suitable for the fulfilment of the general educational aims. The normal length of the programme will be one academic year of full-time study or the part-time equivalent. The programme regulations must indicate what proportions of the programme of study are at second or third year Honours Degree level and also take account of the requirements of the respective professional bodies in respect of minimum entry requirements and the duration of the programme. The specific title of the DPS indicates the profession to which it relates, such as: Diploma in Professional Studies in Education Diploma in Professional Studies in Nursing.

- **Higher National Certificates (HNCs)** are work-related (vocational) higher education qualifications designed to give students the skills to put acquired knowledge to effective use in a particular job. The normal length of the HNC will be two academic years. HNCs are at level four on the National Qualifications Framework
- **University Diploma /Certificate:** meets the demands of the award map and is not available as an intermediate award.
- **Leathersellers Certificate:** reserved for the discipline of Leather Studies.

Appendix 2 – Combined Studies Guidelines

See Regulation 2.1.7 for more information

What is a Combined Studies award?

Section 2.1.7 of the Academic and Student Regulations states that 'Award titles should not normally reflect more than three subject components. Where there are more than three significant components an award of Combined Studies will be made. An award of Combined Studies will also be made where a student has not met the requirements of the relevant Award Map'.

This means that Combined Studies awards are made for these reasons:

- A student is studying a programme of study that combines more than three significant subject components
- A student has not met the requirements of their award map
- A student has not been able to complete their original programme of studies due to unforeseen circumstances or changes in that programme

Combined Studies awards comprise the same amount of credits as any other award. Similarly, the classification algorithm works in the same way as for any other award. A Combined Studies Award carries the same status as any other award. Great care is taken when a Combined Studies award is suggested and implemented to keep module choices as relevant and coherent to a student's other modules as possible.

When might a Combined Studies award be suggested?

Combined Studies Degrees are not available for students to apply to and have no award map.

Circumstances are often very specific to a particular student, but some examples of when a Combined Studies award may be suggested are:

- A programme has been discontinued and the student, due to study breaks/module failure, has fallen outside the transition period that would normally be put in place to see students registered on that programme through.
- A student, for example due to illness/injury/fitness to practise issues, cannot complete the original award and is unable to transfer to an alternative named award.
- A student has extensive timetable clashes that cannot be resolved and wishes to complete within three years rather than studying for an additional year, and must therefore go off their Award Map.

When the suggestion of studying Combined Studies is made by the University and not by the student it is often the final option considered after all other options. Prior to Combined Studies being considered the University might consider, for example:

- Studying (an) alternative designated module(s).
- Substituting a module on the award map for another, comparable module elsewhere (this must be approved by the Programme Leader and the Student Support and Advice Manager).
- Moving to part time or split level study.

Implications of a Combined Studies award

For some professions and some postgraduate study, where a specific named undergraduate degree is required, a Combined Studies award may not allow the student access. Students who consider that this may be applicable to them are strongly encouraged to discuss any potential implications of studying a Combined Studies award with the Changemaker Hub before making any decisions.

Where appropriate, a Combined Studies Degree may include the major subject path in parentheses [for example, Combined Studies (Dance)].

Appendix 3 – Programme Specification Template

Please see here:

<https://searchtundra.northampton.ac.uk/?tag=087ce511-efb8-460c-95e3-4ef07649c80b>

Appendix 4 - Module Specification Template

Please see here:

<https://searchtundra.northampton.ac.uk/?tag=087ce511-efb8-460c-95e3-4ef07649c80b>

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