

Academic Credit Framework

1. Introduction and scope

- 1.1. Academic credit indicates the amount and level of learning. Each module has a specified number of academic credits and is set at a particular academic level. The number of credits indicates the notional workload associated with the module, while the academic level indicates the level of intellectual challenge.
- 1.2. Queen Mary expresses the structure of its taught programmes in terms of credits. For each programme, a tariff of credits is assigned to indicate the volume of learning.
- 1.3. The Framework applies to all taught awards and the programmes and modules leading to those awards. Some postgraduate taught modules that contribute to research degrees and research studies training may also be credit-rated in accordance with this Framework.
- 1.4. This document is intended to provide information on the operation of academic credits systems at Queen Mary.
- 1.5. This iteration of the Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework is effective from 1 August 2025 and applies to proposals and amendments made to programmes and modules from that date forward.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The Framework provides a structure for all modules and programmes leading to taught awards of Queen Mary or the University of London.

3. Key definitions

- 3.1. **Condonement** – The process that allows an Examination Board to award credit to a student and/or to permit progression or award despite failure to achieve a pass mark subject to specified conditions. The Academic Regulations stipulate where this is possible.
- 3.2. **Credit** – A means of quantifying and recognising learning whenever and wherever it is achieved. Credit is awarded in recognition of achievement of learning outcomes at a specified level.

- 3.3. **Level** (academic level) – An indicator of the relative complexity, demand and depth of learning. Level descriptors outline the generic characteristics of outcomes of learning at a specific level. Each module has an assigned level, and credit for the module will be issued at that level.
- 3.4. **Module** – An approved block of teaching and learning leading to the award of academic credit and forming part of a programme of study.
- 3.5. **Programme of study** (programme) - A defined set of modules approved by Senate, or its delegated authority, and leading to an award of Queen Mary or the University of London.

4. Legislative and Regulatory context

- 4.1. The Framework aligns with the 2024 QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ), 2021 QAA Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Advice on Academic Credit Arrangements, 2021 SEEC Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education and Sector-recognised standards as defined by the Office for Students (OfS) (condition of registration B5).

5. Programme and award regulations

- 5.1. The Framework informs curriculum design and structure and the way in which Queen Mary understands and expresses its academic standards. The Framework is reflected in the Academic Regulations and in programme and module regulations.
- 5.2. In order to be eligible for an award of Queen Mary or the University of London, a student must take an approved programme of study, obtain a specified number of credits - the number required depending on the award in question - and meet any other requirements specified for the programme.

6. Exceptions

- 6.1. Exceptions to the Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework are approved by the Senate, or its delegated authority, through the programme and module approval processes.

7. Notional study and academic credit

- 7.1. Notional study hours represent the entirety of student effort required to achieve the specified learning outcomes at a particular level; this includes all aspects of learning and teaching activity such as classroom-based activities, self-directed learning, coursework assessments, practical work, laboratory work, and clinical skills practise.

- 7.2. One credit point is typically described as being equivalent to 10 hours of notional study. Thus, a 20 credit module would require approximately 200 hours of study time to achieve the learning outcomes of the module.
- 7.3. An academic year on a standard full-time undergraduate programme is 120 credits, equating to approximately 1200 notional study hours.
- 7.4. An academic year on a standard full-time postgraduate Masters programme is 180 credits, equating to approximately 1800 notional study hours.

8. Module size

- 8.1. Queen Mary undergraduate modules have credit values of 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 45 or 60 credits. The most common sizes are 10, 15 and 30.
 - a) A single 120 credit point undergraduate module which encompasses a full academic year where the student is studying abroad or in industry is also permitted.
- 8.2. Queen Mary postgraduate modules have credit values of 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 45, 60, 90 and 120 credits. The maximum value for a taught module is 60 academic credit points and 120 academic credits points for a dissertation or research project.
 - a) The use of modules with values greater than 30 credits should be carefully considered as failure in these modules cannot be condoned. These modules will be 'core' by default.

9. Designation of modules

- 9.1. In a set of programme regulations, modules may have different designations, as described in the following paragraphs.
- 9.2. Core module must be taken and must be passed for a student to demonstrate that they have met one or more of the programme level learning outcomes.
- 9.3. Compulsory module must be taken but does not need to be passed for a student to demonstrate that they have met all of the programme level learning outcomes.
- 9.4. Pre-requisite module must be taken before a subsequent specified module can be taken.
- 9.5. Co-requisite modules must be taken at the same time as each other.
- 9.6. Overlapping module has similar content to another module and cannot be taken if the other module is taken.

10. Academic level

- 10.1. Each module has an associated academic level that reflects its depth, complexity, amount of pre-requisite knowledge and the academic skills required. The academic level of a module is informed by the subject for that module and remains constant for all programmes within which it occurs.
- 10.2. For each approved module there is one academic level. Where significant elements of content and teaching are shared by more than one module, each module is approved separately at the appropriate academic level. Each module should be distinguished by different learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessment that reflect the academic level.
- 10.3. Where it is academically desirable and compliant with the relevant award rules, programmes may be designed so that student are able to take modules at different academic levels in the same development year.
- 10.4. A minimum of three quarters of the credits taken in each developmental year must be at the directly corresponding academic level.

11. Assessment

- 11.1. All assessment for a programme is organised within modules and is designed to test the designated learning outcomes of the modules. An assessment may cover one individual module or a set of modules.

12. Award of academic credit

- 12.1. The award of academic credit relates to achievement in individual modules. Academic credit is awarded to a student who has achieved the designated learning outcomes and thus met the requirements to pass the module.
- 12.2. At postgraduate level it is possible to award academic credit in the event of module failure, where the Academic Regulations provide for this. The outcome is recorded as 'fail condoned, academic credit awarded'.
- 12.3. The academic credit awarded is that approved for the module; the amount of academic credit does not vary in accordance with the level of achievement. The level of achievement is reflected in the module mark.
- 12.4. It is possible for the academic credit to be revoked where the Academic Regulations provide for it.
- 12.5. The Academic Regulations make provision for admission with accredited prior learning (APL). APL is quantified in terms of academic credit to ensure that the overall academic credit requirements are met. Credit that has contributed to a previous award cannot normally be used as APL towards a Queen Mary programme.

- 12.6. Each academic award has a normal total credit value. The total credit value includes a minimum amount of credit that is required at the academic level of the award and the maximum amount of credit at the lowest academic level.

13. Intercalated programmes

- 13.1. Intercalated programmes allow students enrolled on a programme to be admitted to study for a one-year intercalated BSc or BMedSci, and to re-enter the original programme the following year.
- 13.2. Programmes designated as intercalated by Senate, or its delegated authority, are only available to students currently registered for a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS), Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) or Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (BVetMed) degree.
- 13.3. Intercalated programmes allow for advance standing for the first two years of the programme (240 academic credits points). Those 240 credit points are also counted towards the requirements of award of the student's original programme.
- 13.4. The intercalated year does not count towards the academic credit requirements of the student's original programme.

14. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

- 14.1. ECTS is based on the principle that 60 credits are equivalent to the learning outcomes and associated workload of a full-time academic year or its equivalent. In current practice, two UK credits are as equivalent to one ECTS credit.
- 14.2. Where academic credit awarded by Queen Mary is to be converted to ECTS, this occurs on the basis of one Queen Mary academic credit point being equivalent to 0.5 ECTS credits regardless of the academic level. The academic level and mark are not converted.
- 14.3. Incoming ECTS credits are incorporated in accordance with the requirements of the programme, and where applicable the collaboration.

15. Transcripts

- 15.1. Transcripts provide details of modules taken by students throughout their programme. They include the academic level, module mark achieved and academic credit points awarded.

16. Further information

- 16.1. For further information on the Academic Credit Framework please contact Queen Mary's Directorate of Governance and Legal Services at qualityandstandards@qmul.ac.uk

17. Review

- 17.1. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.
- 17.2. Minor updates to this policy that do not affect the rules, principles or intent of this policy may be approved by the Head of Academic Quality and Standards on behalf of the Education Quality and Standards Committee.

Credit Framework

Typical higher education qualifications within each level	FHEQ level	Minimum credit
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	8	Not typically credit-rated
Professional doctorates (DClin, EngD, MD (Res), DrPS, DClinDent, DPsych)		540 (360 at FHEQ level 8)
Research Master's degrees (ResM, MPhil)	7	Not typically credit-rated
Taught Master's degrees (MA, MBA, MCLinDent, Med, LLM, MPA, MRes, MSc)		180 (150 at FHEQ level 7)
Integrated Master's degrees (MEng, MSci)		480 (120 at FHEQ level 7)
Primary (or first) qualifications in medicine (MBBS) and dentistry (BDS)		Not typically credit-rated
Postgraduate Diplomas (PgDip)		120 (90 at FHEQ level 7)
Postgraduate Certificates (CILT, PgCert)		60 (40 at FHEQ level 7)
Bachelor's degree with honours (BA, BEng, LLB, BMedSci, BSc (Econ), BSc (Eng))	6	360 (90 at FHEQ level 6)
Graduate Diplomas (GradDip)		80 (80 at FHEQ level 6)
Graduate Certificates (GradCert)		40 (40 at FHEQ level 6)
Foundation Degrees (FdA, FdSc)	5	240 (90 at FHEQ level 5)
Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)		240 (90 at FHEQ level 5)
Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)	4	120 (90 at FHEQ level 4)

Qualification	Academic level	Minimum credit
Foundation Certificate (FdCert)	3	120

Policy Information and Document Control

Policy title	<i>Queen Mary University of London Academic Credit Framework</i>
Version number	<i>V1.0</i>
Related policies and procedures	<i>Academic Regulations Assessment Handbook Principles of Academic Degree Programme Design Principles of Assessment Design</i>
Superseded policies	<i>N/A</i>
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Next review due	<i>Summer 2026</i>
Policy owner	<i>Simon Hayter Head of Academic Quality and Standards</i>
Policy contact	<i>Academic Quality and Standards qualityandstandards@qmul.ac.uk</i>

Version Control

Version	Date	Reason for updates/Summary of key changes
V1.0	<i>04.06.2025</i>	<i>Reviewed to update to reflect current regulatory context and sector guidance. Credit Framework table amended to describe Queen Mary delivery.</i>