SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC AWARDS FRAMEWORK

Approved by: Academic Board 10 December 2013 (Minute AB/13/58)

ACADEMIC AWARDS FRAMEWORK

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APPENDICES

SECTION 1   Purpose of the Academic Awards Framework

1.1   The Academic Awards Framework sets the parameters within which all the University's academic programmes are designed and approved and incorporates:

- The definitive list and definition of qualifications approved that may be conferred by the University
- The required minimum volume and level of credit for each qualification
- Reference to Generic Level Outcomes for each level of award (with reference to the England, Wales, Northern Ireland (EWNI) Generic Credit Level Descriptors (previously known as NICATS)
- Reference to Generic Level Descriptors for each cycle of the Framework for Qualifications of the Higher European Areas (FQ-HEA), known as the Dublin Descriptors
- Design principles for academic programmes in terms of their structure and content

1.2   At Sheffield Hallam University, the terms 'programme' and 'course' are used interchangeably and this is reflected in the Academic Awards Framework. For clarity, the following definition, taken from the QAA Quality Code, applies to both terms:

'[the term] *programme is used to describe any stand-alone, approved curriculum followed by a student, which carries academic credit or otherwise contributes to an award of the degree-awarding body. The provision may be of any length or credit value, and includes pre-defined programmes leading to a specific qualification, multidisciplinary programmes, pathways through a modular scheme, short periods of study leading to the award of academic credit, as well as programmes where the specific content is negotiated between the higher education provider and an individual student.' [Quality Code, B1, Programme Design and Approval, QAA, 2013]*

1.3   The Framework is designed to:

- Provide reference points within which the academic standards of all University awards can be defined and referenced to relevant national and international benchmarks
- Ensure consistency in the use of University qualification titles

- Enable a common understanding of the characteristics and achievements represented by a University award
- Provide guidance to course designers

1.4 The Framework is underpinned by the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, Assessment Regulations, other relevant academic policies and Equality and Diversity policies which are intended, collectively, to define and shape the student experience at Sheffield Hallam University[1].

1.5 The Framework aligns with the strategic plan of the University and is underpinned by the objectives, approach and values expressed in the University's Mission and Vision Statement.

1.6 The University's Awards Framework has been designed to ensure that it aligns with The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ, 2008) and The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA, 2005), thereby ensuring that its awards are comparable with those offered by the HE Sector England, Wales and Northern Ireland HE sector and within the broader international context. As appropriate, Programme Specifications for University awards will include reference to relevant external reference points including national Subject Benchmark Statements published by the Quality Assurance Agency, which set out expectations about standards of degrees in a range of subject areas. Benchmark Statements describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding or competence in the subject. Accredited courses are expected to use other external reference points, including professional standards, skills and competency frameworks, published by the relevant professional, statutory and/or regulatory bodies (PSRBs) who are responsible for the accreditation of such courses.

1.7 The University is also committed to operating a credit based system which aligns with established HE credit practice within the UK and with the Higher Education Credit Framework for England (QAA, 2008). Academic credit is awarded against modules which are passed according to the University's Assessment Regulations and is based on the standard of one credit equating to ten notional student learning hours. Notional student learning hours are defined as the 'number of hours which it is expected that a learner (at a

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[1] As at November 2013 the relevant academic policies are Employability (E4E) and Graduate Outcomes.

particular level) will spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes at that level' (HE Credit Framework, QAA, 2008).

SECTION 2   ACADEMIC AWARDS: CREDIT AND LEVEL MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

University Award	Minimum Overall Credits	Minimum Required at Highest Level	Other Credit and Level Requirements	QAA FHEQ Qualification Level	Corresponding FQ-EHEA Cycle	ECTS Credits Equivalence	How Award is Classified	Intermediate Awards	Maximum Duration of Course in FT Mode
University Preparatory Year (Extended Degree Programmes) nb: this does not confer an HE award and is only available as part of an extended degree programme	120	120 @ L3 (not QCF L3)		-		60		n/a	2 years
University Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE)	120	120 @ L4		4		60		n/a	2 years
BTEC Higher National Certificate (HNC)	150	30 @ L5	Remaining 120 @ L4 or higher	4		60		n/a	2 years
Certificate in Education (CertEd)	120	60 @ L5	Remaining 60 @ L4 or higher	4		60		n/a	2 years
University Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE)	240	120 @ L5	Remaining 120 @ L4 or higher	5	SHORT CYCLE (within or linked to the first cycle) quals	120		Cert HE	4 years
BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND)	240	120 @ L5	Remaining 120 @ L4 or higher	5		120		Cert HE	4 years
Foundation Degree eg. FdA / FdSc	240	120 @ L5	Minimum of 100 @ L4 or higher	5		120		Cert HE	4 years
Advanced Diploma of Higher Education	300	60 @ L6	Minimum of 120 @ L5 and remaining 120 @ L4 or higher	5		150		n/a	3 years
Graduate Certificate	60	60 @ L6		6		30		n/a	1 year
Graduate Diploma	120	120 @ L6		6		60		Grad Cert	2 years
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (ProfGCE)	120	60 @ L6	Remaining 60 @ L5 or higher; meets requirements for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)	6		60		n/a	1 year
Bachelor's Degree* (ordinary degree) eg. BA / BSc / BEng	300	60@L6	Minimum of 120 @ L5 and remaining 120 @ L4 or higher	6	FIRST CYCLE (end of cycle) quals	150		Cert HE Dip HE	5 years
Bachelor's Degree with Honours*	360	120 @ L6	Minimum of 120 @ L5	6		180		Cert HE	6 years

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(honours degree) eg. BA (Hons), BSc (Hons), BEng (Hons), LLB (Hons)			and remaining 120 at L4 or higher					Dip HE Degree	or 7 years in SW mode 2 years for L6 'top-up'
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	120	60 @ L7	Remaining 60 @ L5 or higher; meets requirements for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)	7		60		n/a but Pg Cert may be approved to recognise L7 credit only	
Postgraduate Certificate (Pg Cert)	60	60 @ L7		7		30		n/a	3 years
Postgraduate Diploma (Pg Dip)	120	120 @ L7		7		60		Pg Cert	3 years
Integrated Masters Degree (first degree)* eg. MEng / MSci / MArt / MComp / MArch / MDes See Note 6.	480	120 @ L7	Remaining 360 meets the requirements of an honours degree	7	SECOND CYCLE **(end of cycle)** quals	240		Cert HE Dip HE Degree	7 years
Masters Degree (taught) eg. MA / MSc / MTL / MBA / MRes / MMedSci / LLM / MEd	180	180 @ L7		7		90		Pg Cert Pg Dip	6 years (including all stages)
Masters Degree by Research eg. LLM by Research	Non credit-rated	• Mastery of an approved research topic or an area of professional practice, correlated with the established field of knowledge and/or professional practice • Demonstration of competence in research methods appropriate to the field • Demonstration of achievement of the University's Generic Learning Outcomes at Level 7		7					24 months

Qualification	Credit rating	Outcomes	Level						Duration
Master of Professional Studies (MProf)	Non credit-rated	• Mastery of an approved research topic or an area of advanced professional practice, correlated with the established field of knowledge and/or professional practice • Demonstration of competence in research methods appropriate to the field • Demonstration of achievement of the University's Generic Learning Outcomes at Level 7	7						24 months
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)	Non credit-rated	• Mastery of an approved research topic, correlated with the established field of knowledge • demonstration of competence in research methods appropriate to the field • demonstration of achievement of Generic Learning Outcomes at L7	7						24 months
Professional Doctorate eg. DBA / EdD / DProf	Non credit-rated	• Mastery of an approved research topic or an area of advanced professional practice that extends the understanding of an established field of knowledge and/or advanced professional practice • consolidation of competence in research methods appropriate to the field • demonstration of achievement of Generic Learning Outcomes at L8	8	THIRD CYCLE **(end of cycle) quals**	-				60 months
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	Non credit-rated	• Mastery of an approved research topic, extending the understanding of an established field of knowledge • consolidation of competence in research methods appropriate to the field • demonstration of achievement of Generic Learning Outcomes at L8	8		-				48 months
Higher Doctorate eg. DEng / DLitt / DSci / LLD	Non credit-rated	• Demonstration of a major original contribution to the advancement or application of knowledge and the status of the individual as a leading authority in the field of study	8		-				

Notes on Sheffield Hallam University Academic Awards Framework

1. The University's Academic Awards Framework is a common Framework for the design of undergraduate and postgraduate courses through which the academic standards of all the University's awards can be defined and can be cross-referenced to relevant external frameworks and benchmarks including:

   - the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) (QAA, revised August 2008) http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/FHEQ08.pdf
   - the Higher Education Credit Framework for England (QAA, August 2008) http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/creditframework.pdf
   - Generic Level Descriptors for England, Wales and Northern Ireland Subject Benchmark Statements http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx

2. Sandwich Mode: University awards marked with an asterisk * are also available as 'sandwich' awards. In addition to the credit requirements shown in the table above, these awards include a substantial period of supervised work experience as a requirement of the award (see AAF, Section 3.9, Mode of Study). Achievement of a sandwich award is indicated on University Certificates and Transcripts.

3. Awards may include credit that has been recognised through the University's procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning. Credit derived from such procedures is indicated on the University Transcript.

4. Substitution of higher level credit, for deficiencies at lower levels, may be permitted subject to meeting the specific aims, learning outcomes and other requirements of individual named awards.

5. Compensation may be applied to all the main Undergraduate awards defined in the table above. The rules for compensation are detailed in the University's Assessment Regulations. Compensation is not available for any Postgraduate award.

6. Integrated Masters degrees are level 7, second cycle qualifications and are positioned at masters level in alignment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), (QAA, 2008) and the HE Credit Framework for England (QAA, 2008). Integrated masters degrees are normally delivered over a minimum of 4 years and contain at least 480 credits, including a minimum of 120 credits at L7 to meet the requirements for a masters level award. The remaining 360 credits are designed to meet the requirements for a first honours degree. Integrated masters awards are recognised as such for funding, fees and external reporting purposes. Integrated masters awards are required meet to the FHEQ Qualification Descriptors for levels 6 and 7 in full. These awards conform to the University's Assessment Regulations for undergraduate awards and are classified in line with the classification methods for bachelor's degrees with honours. Further information is provided in the University's UG Assessment Regulations.

7. The minimum credit and level requirements must be met for all awards, as specified above. Exemptions will be required where credit and level requirements would be exceeded and this will only be considered for the purposes of meeting the specific requirements for accreditation by a relevant Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body (PSRB).

AAF Credit and Level Requirements revised November 2013.
Approved by Academic Board 10 December 2013

SECTION 3   GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES (ALL AWARDS)

3.1   GENERAL PRINCIPLES

This section of the Framework sets out a number of general principles applying to all University academic awards. All University programmes should be designed to ensure:

- academic coherence
- learning outcomes that are appropriate for the level of the award
- a high quality student experience
- preparation for employment or career enhancement through the development of relevant skills
- students are well prepared for both local and global employment and citizenship through a curriculum that addresses international perspectives
- a range of learning, teaching and assessment methods and approaches supported and enhanced through the appropriate use of learning technologies and other resources
- an award title which accurately reflects the content of the student's programme
- outcomes of study that are aligned with the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) Qualification Descriptors, national Subject Benchmark Statements and/or other relevant external reference points

and be underpinned by:

- a strong programme/course focus that is designed to foster students' capability to develop their knowledge, skills, scholarly attitudes and graduate attributes
- progressive growth in learner autonomy and independence
- a validated Programme Specification which states the approved aims and learning outcomes of the award
- market responsiveness
- cost effectiveness

3.2   UNIVERSITY LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY AND RELATED ACADEMIC POLICIES

Programme/course designers will need to take full cognisance of the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, associate academic policies and Equality and Diversity policies.

3.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.3.1 A learning outcome is defined by the Quality Assurance Agency as 'What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning'[2].

3.3.2 The intended outcomes of courses and modules are an integral part of quality assurance in higher education. They are also a central feature of effective teaching, learning and assessment at the University, and are pivotal to assuring standards.

3.3.3 Learning outcomes provide designers with a tool for decision-making, with the aim of achieving full alignment between programme or course, level of study and individual modules. A coherent course will ensure that the module learning outcomes enable the student to evidence achievement of the learning outcomes at the appropriate level. A coherent programme or course will also ensure that there is appropriate progression in the learning outcomes between each level of study up to enable students to evidence the overall programme/course learning outcomes. Learning outcomes should always be written in language that is easily understood by all students and other stakeholders.

3.4 PROGRAMME/COURSE STRUCTURE

The Awards Framework contains a set of the University's approved curriculum models available to programme designers; all programmes must conform to one of these approved models (see Sections 4 - 6 and Appendix 1).

3.4.1 Approved Curriculum Models
All programmes/courses must conform to all general principles for design and delivery and to the models for programme structures, as specified in the appendices to this Framework, unless they have approved exemption(s) granted by the University.

3.4.2 Specification of Course Structure
The programme/course structure must specify the way in which all associated modules (Core and Elective) contribute to all awards associated with the programme/course,

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[2] http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/glossary/Pages/glossary-l.aspx

including intermediate awards. This is required at validation and is usually described in the Programme Specification. A clear structure is particularly important in relation to modules which are designated as 'Core' as these are required for a specific award. Further detailed guidance on the purpose, designation and use of Core and Elective Modules within course structures is provided in Section 3.13 of the Framework.

3.4.3 Course Structure and International Exchanges / Erasmus Exchanges

Undergraduate courses that include the opportunity to undertake an international exchange with an overseas institution must do so on the basis of a single semester of study (60 credits) or on the basis of a full academic year spent overseas (120 credits) for both outgoing and incoming students. Exchanges are normally included in the second year of a three year honours degree programme, at level 5. Students who undertake an international exchange as part of their Sheffield Hallam University programme of study must meet all intended aims and learning outcomes for the programme and also meet any additional requirements, e.g. as specified for professionally accredited courses, as approved for their final (exit) award. For accredited courses, this may mean there are limitations or restrictions on the availability of overseas exchanges.

3.5 AWARD TITLES

Award Title for all programmes/courses are subject to approval by the University through the validation process. Once approved, award titles may only be changed subsequently following a revalidation exercise or through specific approval by the Academic Board.

3.5.1 Approval of Award Titles

Programme designers must be able to justify, at validation, the title of the programme/course and award in terms of the programme content and with reference to relevant external reference points, including national Subject Benchmark Statements and QAA guidance on qualification nomenclature (FHEQ, Section 5). The title of any University award should provide an accurate reflection of a student's programme of study. A single named award must follow the same credit structure and lead to the same overall programme level learning outcomes for all students enrolled on the programme/course except where separate, specific named pathways have been approved as part of the programme structure (see 3.5.5). Course designers must also ensure that intermediate award titles are justified by the learning outcomes of the modules studied for those awards.

3.5.2 Joint Honours Degrees and Award Titles

A joint honours degree award title should be used where a programme/course of study comprises **two different academic subject areas** / **disciplines** in approximately equal proportions by credit value (50/50% equal credit per discipline/subject area). The award title should reflect this balance of subject disciplines by using the standard format, in alphabetical order of subject unless otherwise validated, as follows:

A (subject 1) <u>AND</u> B (subject 2)

3.5.3   Major-Minor Degrees and Award Titles

A major-minor honours degree award title should be used where a programme/course of study comprises **two different academic subject areas** / **disciplines** and must consist of 80 credits in the major subject and 40 credits in the minor subject at both levels 5 and 6. The award title should reflect this balance of subject disciplines by using the standard format, in alphabetical unless otherwise validated, as follows:

A (subject 1) <u>WITH</u> B (subject 2)

Award titles should not normally reflect more three subject components. Combinations of three subject disciplines may be permitted and will be considered on a case by case basis. QAA guidance on this issue is that the use of 'studies' or 'combined studies' would be appropriate within the award title.

3.5.4   Routes and Award Titles

The use of pre-defined 'routes' through a programme has implications for both the structure and title of an award. Course designers may define a number of named, specialist routes leading from a main or 'generic' programme/course of study and/or award title, **within the same subject area or discipline**. A **'Route'** is defined as a designated collection of core and elective modules, created through the use of pre-defined sets of modules leading to a specific named award title associated with a specialism linked to the 'main' subject area. In such cases, the award title of the named route will be further distinguished from the main award title by the inclusion of a subject specialism or 'field of study' within the same discipline, indicated at the end of the 'main' award title using parentheses or a colon, e.g. BSc (Hons) English (Children's Literature); BSc (Hons) Computing: Systems and Networks; MA Education (Leadership). Each separate named end award title (i.e. named 'route') will require a separate set of learning outcomes from those described for the main award to

distinguish the named route from the main award. Students must achieve all the learning outcomes associated with either the main award or the specific named route, depending on their final (exit) award. For undergraduate degrees, a named route should be distinguished from the 'main' award by at least 80 credits overall, distributed between levels 5 and 6, and which may include a dissertation module designed specifically for an individual, named route. At postgraduate level, a named route should be distinguished from the 'main' award by at least 60 credits, distributed between the Pg Diploma and Masters stages of the award. This must include at least one 15 credit taught module relevant to the specialism in addition to the dissertation or project module. Models for the structure of programmes incorporating named routes are provided in the appendices to the Academic Awards Framework.

3.5.5 Pathways and Award Titles

The use of pre-defined 'pathways' through a programme has implications for the structure, though not the title, of an award. Course designers may define a number of specialist 'pathways' through a programme/course, all of which will lead to the same main award title. A number of specified 'pathways', **within the same subject area or discipline,** may be used to provide student choice or to meet employer/industry requirements or to address market demand. However, all such pre-defined 'pathways' will lead to the same end award title. A **'Pathway'** is defined as a designated collection of modules made up of sets of pre-defined combinations of core and elective modules which are all relevant to the aims and learning outcomes of the 'main' award title. A programme/course may have several pre-defined pathways and may be referred to in the marketing of the course. However, it must be made clear to students that all 'pathways' will lead to the same main award title, regardless of their particular chosen 'pathway'. If references to 'pathways' are included in marketing of the course it should be clear to applicants and students what a specific pathway will include. All students will be required to achieve the overall programme learning outcomes associated with the main, named award. Separate learning outcomes are not required for designated pathways as these all lead to the same main award title, e.g. BSc (Hons) Railway Engineering may have 3 pre-defined 'pathways', to meet employer requirements, such as a 'Signalling' pathway, a 'Track' pathway and a 'Management' pathway. Each pathway will comprise a specific group of elective modules to address a particular specialism/area of study, but the end award title remains the same for all students. The specific elective modules taken for each pathway will be detailed the student's exit transcript.

3.6 DUAL AND JOINT AWARDS (IN COLLABORATION WITH EXTERNAL AWARDING BODIES)

The Academic Awards Framework aligns with the QAA's definition of these types of award. The QAA defines these awards as follows:

***Dual/double or multiple awards:** Arrangements where two or more awarding bodies together provide a single jointly delivered programme (or programmes) leading to separate awards (and separate certification) being granted by both, or all, of them. (QAA, Quality Code, Chapter B10)*

Joint award:[3] An arrangement under which two or more awarding bodies together provide a programme leading to a single award made jointly by both, or all, participants. A single certificate or document (signed by the competent authorities) attests to the successful completion of this jointly delivered programme, replacing then separate institutional or national qualifications. (QAA, Quality Code, Chapter B10)

NB: This section of the Framework will be updated when the University completes its internal review of dual and joint awards and when the QAA has published the outcomes of a consultation exercise during 2013/14.

3.7   INTERMEDIATE AND ALTERNATIVE AWARDS

The default position for all University awards is that a set of standard intermediate awards must be available within all programmes as defined within the Academic Awards Framework (See Awards Table, Section 2).

3.7.1   Standard Intermediate Awards (All Programmes)

The overall educational aims and learning outcomes of a programme, at the highest award level, are set out in the relevant Programme Specification. In addition, a set of defined aims and learning outcomes will be approved for each intermediate award at validation. The learning outcomes for each intermediate award should clearly describe what a student should be able to demonstrate by the end of each intermediate stage or possible exit or 'step-off' point within a programme. Programme designers must ensure that intermediate award titles are justified by the learning outcomes of the modules studied at each stage of the programme. The intermediate stages should show clear progression towards the overall award learning outcomes.

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[3] *Note that Joint Award in this context is not the same as a joint honours award, denoting study of 2 subject disciplines in equal proportions.*

3.7.2 Conferment of Intermediate Awards

Intermediate (lower level) awards are not routinely conferred to students whilst they are accumulating credit and progressing towards a higher level 'target' award as part of the same programme of study. Intermediate (lower level) awards will be conferred to eligible students who choose, or are required, to exit the programme at an intermediate stage, providing the requirements for the intermediate award have been met.

3.7.3 Accredited Programmes and Alternative Awards

Programmes accredited by a relevant professional, statutory and/or regulatory body (PSRB) must always include a range of suitable alternative awards available to students who may pass the requisite modules and gain academic credit appropriate to the named award, but who are not eligible for the accredited award because they have not met the specified PSRB requirements. Students who are unable to meet the requirements for an accredited award must be provided with opportunities to transfer to a non-accredited, but academically related award, at the appropriate stage within the programme.

3.7.4 Accredited Programmes and Variation from General Principles, Credit and Level Requirements of the Academic Awards Framework

The general principles, credit and level requirements and maximum durations as specified within the Academic Awards Framework may be varied only to enable individual programmes/courses to meet the requirements for accreditation as specified by a relevant Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body (PSRB), as appropriate. In such cases, formal exemption from the University's Academic Awards Framework will be required. Accredited Programmes may incorporate other additional requirements specified by PSRBs and other exemptions may be required. See also sections on **Maximum Duration for UG Courses, Recognition of Prior Learning and Additional Regulations/Other Criteria Applying to Specific Courses**.

3.8 PROGRAMME/COURSE MANAGEMENT

Programme/course management is under review with the aim of introducing single tier Departmental Boards. Departmental Boards will have responsibility for both the quality management and assessment processes related to cognate groups of courses. There will be a close relationship between the Board(s) and the department responsible for offering the relevant programmes. The new Boards are scheduled for introduction during sessions 2014/15 and 2015/16, subject to approval by the Academic Board.

3.9 MODES OF STUDY

Programmes can be validated to be delivered in full-time, sandwich or part-time mode either by attendance or by distance learning or by some combination of these modes.

3.9.1 Undergraduate Programmes - FT/PT Study Modes and Credit

Undergraduate programmes are designated as full time if students study 90 credits or more credits in one **academic** year, over two semesters. A full time academic year of study at undergraduate level would normally consist of 120 credits. A part time academic year of study at undergraduate level would normally consist of less than 90 credits.

3.9.2 Postgraduate Programmes - FT/PT Study Modes and Credit

Postgraduate programmes are normally designated as full time when studied within a full **calendar** year (over three trimesters). A full time calendar year of study at postgraduate level would normally consist of 180 credits. A part time calendar year of study at postgraduate level would normally consist of between 60 and 90 credits.

3.9.3 Recognised Modes of Study - Approval and Reporting

The recognised modes of study that can be approved at validation and are defined for external reporting purposes by HEFCE/HESA, are as follows:

Full Time Study Mode

Students who are normally required to study for periods amounting to at least 21 hours per week, for 24 weeks within the year of study.

Part Time Study Mode

Part-time students are those who do not meet the criteria for Full time study (as defined above) and therefore study, on average, less than 21 hours per week for less than 24 weeks per year or are studying on a FT course which lasts for less than 24 weeks.

Distance Learning Mode (can be FT DL or PT DL)

Programmes/courses which are not delivered at a University campus or at an offsite partner campus or other location but are wholly delivered by the University 'at a distance', using online delivery methods only or a combination of online delivery and a limited amount of residential or block delivery, are termed 'distance learning' courses. Distance learning courses can be validated in either full time or part time mode.

Sandwich Mode

The 'sandwich mode' of study applies to programmes which incorporate a significant period of supervised work experience or industrial placement of at least an academic year. Sandwich courses are distinct from other courses that are offered in FT or PT mode which may include credit bearing work-based learning modules involving shorter periods of placement. Sandwich courses typically involve a compulsory or optional 'sandwich' year of study which is non-credit bearing. For external reporting purposes, sandwich years are defined by HEFCE/HESA as either a 'thick' or a 'thin' sandwich according to the following criteria:

__HESA Definitions of Sandwich Degrees__

Thick sandwich *students are those for which an industrial (or other) placement causes a continuous absence from full-time study of at least one academic year.*

Thin sandwich *must involve the student in an average of more than 21 hours study a week for a minimum of 24 weeks study/placement.*

Only those programmes/courses which match the above HESA definitions and meet the minimum requirements for sandwich programmes will be allowed to award a degree 'in the sandwich mode'. The wording on the degree certificate will reflect the 'sandwich' mode of study.

Other Distinctive Features of Sandwich Degrees

Programmes/courses which offer students an optional sandwich year must also provide a full time mode of study as an alternative for students who are unable to gain a sandwich year placement. Sandwich courses should incorporate both pre- and post-placement modules that enable students to prepare for their sandwich year and allow an opportunity to reflect on their learning during the sandwich year after they have returned to full time study during the fourth and final year of the sandwich course.

Note on Blended Learning

Blended Learning is <u>not</u> a mode of study that is recognised by, or can be externally reported to, HESA/HEFCE. Therefore its use can only be informal and is usually used when describing a course which integrates face to face taught and distance learning/online learning delivery methods (see also Module Delivery Patterns, below).

3.10   COURSE DURATION FOR UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

The table below gives the **maximum** permitted duration for each of the main undergraduate awards. The maximum duration applies to the highest level, intended target award of the student, at their initial enrolment. This does not preclude the awarding of intermediate awards to students who do not achieve their intended award. Professionally accredited UG programmes may be limited to less than the maximum durations specified in the table below in order to meet the requirements of the relevant Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body (PSRB). Such programmes will be subject to formal exemption being granted by the University.

Award	Full Time	Part Time
Integrated Masters* (incl SW mode)	7 years	9 years
Sandwich Degree with Honours	7 years	9 years
Honours Degree	6 years	8 years
Degree (non honours)	5 years	7 years
Honours Degree (top-up degree, L6 only)	2 years	3 years
Foundation Degree	4 years	6 years
DipHE	4 years	6 years
CertHE	2 years	3 years
HND	4 years	6 years
HNC	2 years	3 years
Graduate Diploma	2 years	3 year
Graduate Certificate	1 year	2 years

Integrated Master's awards meet the requirements for a first UG degree for course duration, fees and funding purposes.

In line with the University's Assessment Regulations, the maximum period of registration may be exceptionally extended by one year, at the discretion of the relevant Award Board, for individual students who have submitted valid extenuating circumstances that have been approved.

3.11   COURSE DURATION FOR POSTGRADUATE COURSES

In order to protect the integrity, currency and relevance of awards, the maximum duration for all taught postgraduate courses, irrespective of their mode of delivery, is as follows:

Award	All Modes of Study
All Taught Postgraduate (Masters) Programmes*	6 years in total, irrespective of mode, with no constituent award at each of the Pg Cert, Pg Dip and Masters stages

	exceeding 3 years in duration.

does not apply to Integrated Masters - see 3.10, above

In line with the University's Assessment Regulations, the maximum period of registration may be exceptionally extended by one year at the discretion of the relevant Award Board for individual students who have submitted valid extenuating circumstances that have been approved.

3.12   RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

The University conforms to sector norms on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The University has procedures for the approval of claims for RPL from individual applicants. The maximum amount of RPL that can be claimed towards a UG honours degree is 240 credits (120 L4 and 120 L5) out of 360 credits. The maximum amount of RPL that can be claimed towards a masters degree is 120 credits out of 180 credits at level 7. The maximum amount of RPL that can be claimed for 'top-up degrees' and ordinary degrees are as set out in the procedures, regulations and maximum credit values for the Recognition of Prior Learning and are published separately. Some accredited programmes may be exempt from the recognition of prior learning in order to meet all requirements for accreditation. Where this is the case, this will be stipulated by the relevant Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body (see also Accredited Programmes, 3.7.4 above).

The term 'Recognition of Prior Learning' should be understood as being distinct and separate from the term 'articulation' which would normally apply to the University's specially- approved recognition of a specific award or awards made by an external provider. Articulations, as opposed to the use of RPL, usually relates to specifically-approved collaborative arrangements.

3.13 ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS OR OTHER CRITERIA APPLYING TO SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES/COURSES

Programmes/courses may incorporate additional regulations or other criteria for passing the whole course or elements of the course, over and above the University's Standard Assessment Regulations. Typically this may be necessary to meet professional requirements for accredited courses. Additional regulations or criteria may be applied to determine whether students can:

- progress to the non-credit bearing placement elements of the programme and, following completion of the placement elements, progress to the next academic stage of the course

and may also be used to determine:

- successful completion of non-credit bearing placement element(s) of the course
- whether a student has met specific, additional requirements for professionally accredited courses, where these are stipulated by a relevant Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body (e.g. satisfying PSRB requirements for professional registration, etc)

In such cases, the additional regulations and/or other criteria must be specified in programme/course documentation and be considered and approved as part of the validation process.

3.14 MODULES

The curriculum will be delivered through modules:

- with specified learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria
- where achievement of the learning outcomes is tested through assessment methods incorporated within the module
- where successful achievement leads to the award of credit (1 credit representing the typical outcome of 10 notional hours of study)
- which are set at one specified level
- that are available in multiples of 20 at Undergraduate level (minimum module size is 20 credits at UG level)
- that are available in multiples of 15 credits at Postgraduate level (minimum module size is 15 credits at PG level)
- which are delivered within a specified period, normally not more than one academic or calendar year (NB: in certain cases, students who do not complete the specified final module assessment task within a period of 13 months may defined as 'non-completers' for external reporting purposes)
- for which marks and award of credit for all students within each individual module cohort are ratified at the next relevant Subject Assessment Board (or Award Board)

following the start date of the module, timing being dependent on whether a module is delivered over one semester or year long

The programme structure must specify the way in which all modules contribute to all awards associated with the programme, including intermediate awards. Course designers must ensure that all award titles, including final and intermediate award titles, can be justified with reference to the specified modules (and associated learning outcomes) that will be studied for each award.

3.14.1 Designation of Modules as Core or Elective

There are two types of modules that can be used to contribute to the overall structure of a programme/course. These are **Core** and **Elective** modules and are defined, respectively, as:

Core Modules are required within all awards and are approved at validation. Core modules are those which a student must pass in order to achieve a named award and are designated as 'core' because they deliver the core content and skills required for the achievement of the programme learning outcomes. The relationship between the learning outcomes of core modules and the overall programme learning outcomes is considered and approved at validation. Core modules may be compensated (unless an exemption from Standard Assessment Regulations has been approved) but cannot be substituted. Students are permitted one re-registration on a core module.

Elective Modules are modules chosen from an agreed, limited list of electives which is specific to the course and is approved at validation. Elective modules also contribute to the overall programme learning outcomes. The list may change from year to year and modules can be added or removed throughout the time a course is operational. Any such amendments to the agreed list of electives, subsequent to a validation, are subject to approval. Elective modules may be compensated or substituted.

The number of elective modules that can be incorporated into a course design is limited by the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Design Principles detailed in this Framework. The overall availability of elective modules will be determined by individual faculties to ensure that all provision remains viable.

3.14.2 Prerequisite Modules

Where academically appropriate and necessary, there may be a formal pre-requisite relationship specified between modules, requiring the study of the prerequisite before a student can proceed on to study the related module. If a module is to be a formal pre-requisite for the study of another module then this must be specified in the course structure and approved at validation.

3.14.3 Placement Periods or Other Non Credit-bearing Modules within a Programme

Some programmes may include defined periods of placement or placement 'modules' which are non credit-bearing but which must be passed in order to gain a sandwich degree or an accredited degree (see also Modes of Study, definition of sandwich degrees, above). Such placements periods and/or modules are approved at validation and cannot be introduced or modified, post-validation, without University approval.

3.14.4 Independent Study Modules (ISMs)

Independent Study Modules (ISMs) consist of credit-bearing, individually negotiated learning activities and outcomes that have not previously been validated as a taught module in a Sheffield Hallam University award. ISMs are normally undertaken within a programme of study at levels 5, 6 and 7 only. ISMs are not normally appropriate for level 4 study other than in exceptional circumstances, e.g. to retrieve a credit shortfall which could not otherwise be retrieved by study of another module that is currently available and being delivered as part of a taught programme. Independent Study Modules are not formally approved as taught modules within an award and are therefore subject to a separate approval process in line with the University's policy, regulations and requirements for ISMs[4]. ISMs may be permitted up to a maximum of 20 credits at level 5 or 6 within an undergraduate award and, exceptionally, up to a maximum of 40 credits per level. At postgraduate level, an ISM may be permitted up to 15 credits and, exceptionally up to a maximum of 30 credits, within a Masters award. Where an ISM is to be undertaken to retrieve a credit deficit (eg. as a replacement for a failed core module that is no longer available) to enable the student to gain an award, the agreed learning outcomes for the ISM must be consistent with those of the core module that has been replaced.

3.14.5 Module Delivery Patterns

Module delivery patterns will need to be specified for each module and approved at validation. Modules may be delivered in one or more of the following ways:

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[4] *See separate policy and procedures.*

(i)   In a single semester (also known as 'short, fat')

(ii)   Across two semesters (also known as 'year-long')

(iii)   In designated blocks of study (also known as 'block delivery')

(iv)   By distance learning/online learning (student studies at a distance from the University).

Note on Blended Learning

Blended Learning is <u>not</u> a mode of study that is recognised by, or can be externally reported to, HESA/HEFCE. Therefore its use can only be informal and is usually used when describing a course which integrates face to face taught and distance learning/online learning delivery methods (see also Modes of Study, above).

3.14.6 Notional Study Hours

Notional study hours are the anticipated hours of study which will be required, on average, for a student to successfully study and complete a module. These are based on 10 notional study hours per 1 academic credit, e.g. 200 hours per 20 credits and continuing on the same scale for modules of higher credit values. A typical full time undergraduate year of 120 credits will require 1200 notional study hours.

3.14.7 Notional Study Hours and Course Delivery

If modules are delivered according to the standard academic calendar then it is recognised that all notional study hours must be accommodated within the student study year. For a FT undergraduate degree course delivering 120 credits per academic year, 1200 notional study hours must be accommodated within the academic year. For a FT postgraduate Masters degree course typically delivering 180 credits per calendar year, 1800 notional study hours must be accommodated within a calendar year. The overall period allowed to incorporate the relevant number of notional study hours will cover teaching weeks, study weeks, the submission of all coursework and/or completion of all scheduled examinations. Notional Study Hours per module are approved at validation and are documented in standard module descriptors. Since 2011 notional study hours are used in the compilation of Key Information Sets (KIS) which must be published nationally for all undergraduate programmes for which a KIS is required. A detailed breakdown of notional study hours (scheduled learning and teaching activities, independent guided study, etc) will be included in a standard format for all Module Descriptors. **The overall delivery of the programme should ensure students (either UG or PG) are not required to study for more than 48 hours per week to achieve the correct number of notional study hours required for the course - i.e. scheduled hours plus guided independent study.**

3.14.8 Modules and Teaching Delivery

It is expected that modules delivered by scheduled learning and teaching activities and by distance/online learning will conform to the full teaching delivery weeks as specified in the UG or PG academic calendar. Modules delivered in a single semester/trimester are taught over 12 teaching weeks and modules delivered across the full year are taught over 24 weeks (UG) and 24 or 36 weeks (PG). Any modules delivered over a shorter period than this will be considered as 'block delivery' and the delivery period should be detailed in course documentation.   Where modules are delivered outside of traditional semester/trimester weekly delivery patterns, programme designers must ensure that students can achieve the required number of notional study hours in a way that supports their learning.

SECTION 4

UNDERGRADUATE TAUGHT PROVISION: PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

4.1   Modules

- All modules will be 20 credits or multiples of 20 credits
- The maximum credit size for a module is 60 credits.

4.2   Level 4 structure

All modules at level 4 are set at 20 credits

4.3   Level 5 structure

The module credit structures available at level 5 are **either**

- 6 x 20 credit modules, **or**
- 4 x 20 and 1 x 40 credit modules.

4.4   Level 6 structure

The module credit structures available at level 6 are **either**

- 6 x 20 credit modules or
- 4 x 20 and 1 x 40 credit modules or
- 3 x 20 and 1 x 60 credit modules.

4.5   Number of Core Modules and Credits

The minimum number of modules and credits within an award to be designated as 'Core' is as follows:

- At **Level 4** *either* 6 x 20 credit modules are designated as Core (120 credits in total) *or* 5 x 20 credit modules are designated as Core (100 credits in total) with 1 x 20 credit module designated as Elective. The Elective module can be used to provide a choice between a single named module or a single language module to be taken from the University Language or English for Academic Purposes schemes
- At **Level 5** a minimum of 60 credits is to be designated as Core
- At **Level 6** a minimum of 40 credits is to be designated as Core

4.6   Number of Elective Modules and Credits

The maximum number credits within an award which can be designated as 'Elective' are as follows:

- **Level 4** - maximum of 20 credits can be designated as Elective (only permitted where University Language Scheme / English for Academic Purposes modules are to be included as the elective choice at L4)
- **Level 5** - a maximum of 60 credits can be designated as Elective
- **Level 6** - a maximum of 80 credits can be designated as Elective

4.7   Implications of these Requirements for

- joint honours (A **and** B): A joint honours degrees requires a minimum 50% of the credit in each subject discipline to be designated as core
- major/minor (A **with** B): A major-minor honours degree requires 80 credits in the major subject and 40 credits in the minor subject at both levels 5 and 6.

4.8   Number of Elective Modules Available at Levels 5 and 6, per Programme

There will be a limit to the number of elective modules which can be offered at levels 5 and 6, to be determined by the Faculty.

4.9   UG Module Delivery Patterns

Modules at undergraduate level can be delivered either (i) in a single semester mode, or (ii) year-long mode, or (iii) block delivery (i.e. in designated blocks of study)

4.10   Balance of Credits across Semesters

Each semester must be equally balanced in terms of the volume of credit taken by a student (for options, see Appendix 5).

4.11   Integrated Masters Degrees

See Section 5, Postgraduate Taught Provision: Programme Structure for further guidance on programme structure for Integrated Masters awards.

4.12   Foundation Degrees: Specific Design Features

Foundation Degrees must align with the national Qualification Benchmark for Foundation Degrees (QAA, 2010). All Foundation Degrees must incorporate the following features:

• Significant sector involvement relevant to the main subject of the FD

• Significant experiential / work-related learning element for both full-time and part-time students

• Flexible pathways into Foundation Degrees to promote access for students studying on a part-time, full-time or distance learning basis, on and off-campus

• Articulation arrangements with at least one University Honours Degree programme for Foundation Degree graduates, plus a statement of progression opportunities to professional qualifications or higher-level NVQs

• An appropriate use of recognition of prior learning (RPL) to facilitate both entry to a Foundation Degree and progression to an associated Honours Degree. As with other University awards, RPL may lead to exemption from academic and/or work-based learning elements of the curriculum - this should be clearly specified in course documentation.

SECTION 5

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT PROVISION: PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

5.1   Modules

- The minimum size for postgraduate (Level 7) modules is 15 credits.
- The maximum size for postgraduate (level 7) modules is 60 credits.

5.2   Credit Values at Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma stages

- Modules at Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma stages of a Masters programme may be in any combination of 15 and 30 credits

5.3   Credit Values at Masters Stage

At the Masters (dissertation/project) stage of a taught Masters award, 15, 45 or 60 credit modules can be used. At Masters stage, credits must be designated as Core.

5.4   Number of Core and Elective Modules

A minimum of 60 credits (out of 180 credits overall) must be designated as Core. At **Pg Cert and Pg Dip stages**, modules designated as either core or elective may be distributed as appropriate to the individual design of the award. At **Masters stage**, all credit must be designated as core and must comprise either:

- 60 credit dissertation/project module   *or*
- 15 credit research methods module plus a 45 credit dissertation/project module

5.5   Number of Elective Modules Available at Pg Cert and Pg Dip Stages

There will be a limit to the number of elective modules which can be offered at level 7 to be determined by the Faculty.

5.6   Integrated Masters Awards and Programme Structure

Integrated Masters degrees are level 7, second cycle qualifications and are positioned at masters level in alignment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), (QAA, 2008) and the HE Credit Framework for England (QAA, 2008). Integrated masters' degrees are normally delivered over a minimum of 4 years and contain at least 480 credits, including a minimum of 120 credits at level 7 to meet the requirements for a masters level award. Integrated Masters awards are required to the FHEQ Qualification Descriptors for levels 6 and 7 in full. The remaining 360 credits are designed to meet the requirements for a first honours degree and are recognised as such for funding, fees and external reporting purposes. These awards comply with the University's UG Assessment Regulations and are

classified in line with the classification system for first degrees (i.e. bachelor's degrees with honours). In terms of programme structure and module sizes, levels 4 to 6 within an Integrated Masters programme must meet the requirements for UG Programme Structures, see Section 4, above. The postgraduate element of an Integrated Masters award can be based on multiples of 20 credits (to align with module sizes used in UG programme structures) or multiples of 15 credits (as in the requirements for the PG programme structures). Where 20 or 40 credit modules are used at L7, these must be 'ring-fenced' to the Integrated Masters course or courses only and cannot be used within the wider PG portfolio. In addition, at least 60 credits at level 7 should be designated as core modules.

5.7   PG Module Delivery Patterns

Modules at postgraduate level can be delivered either (i) in a single semester mode, or (ii) year-long* mode, or (iii) block delivery. Postgraduate programmes may be delivered according to either a standard calendar or an academic year.

year-long mode for postgraduate module delivery will be at least two trimesters in duration (see Appendices, Structure Models for Taught Postgraduate Provision)

SECTION 6 SMALL AWARDS, OTHER CREDIT-BEARING SHORT COURSES AND MODULES; NON CREDIT-BEARING ACTIVITY

6.1   The University's range of 'small' awards are generally aimed at those returning to higher education, particularly in the context of work-based learning (pre-degree) or for the purposes of recognising achievement in continuing professional development (post experience and/or postgraduate).   Small awards at Sheffield Hallam University are therefore intended to meet the needs of students wishing to undertake additional qualifications for a variety of reasons and also to meet the needs of employers and faculties. Small awards fall within the scope of the Academic Awards Framework and are subject to the same formal approval processes as standard awards.   Course designers may put forward proposals for Small Awards choosing the most relevant award that is suited to the particular business need (see Table of Credit and Level Requirements for Small Awards, 6.4, below).

6.2   Individual, unprogrammed or free-standing modules or groups of modules amounting to a total of credit less than 60 credits (UG) or 30 credits (PG) are not normally approved as leading to a formal University award on the grounds of the additional approval, administrative and operating costs that would be incurred.   Individual or groups of unprogrammed modules may be approved as part of validated, award-bearing provision but may also be used for unprogrammed, free-standing delivery outside a specific award-bearing programme. Alternatively, individual credit-bearing modules or groups of modules may be approved separately, for the purposes of providing CPD provision or other extra-curricula activities such as short, credit-bearing courses which do not lead to a University main or 'small' award. The achievement of small amounts of credit from this type of provision (up to 60 credits at UG level or up to 30 credits at PG level) will be formally recognised through the issue of a high quality, detailed University transcript of credit **only** (exit transcript).

6.3   Only coherent programmes of study that are formally validated as award-bearing provision (with credit and level requirements as specified in Table 6.3 below) will lead to eligible students being conferred with the appropriate small award and will be recognised by a relevant formal award certificate.
IMPORTANT NOTE: The conferment of any of the small awards described below will not lead to eligibility to attend any of the University's main graduation ceremonies.

6.4   Table of Credit and Level Requirements for Small Awards

Award	Minimum Number of Credits Required	Minimum Number of Credits at the Level of Award	FHEQ Level
Transcript of Credit Only*	**Undergraduate** (Levels 4, 5, 6) Minimum of 20 credits, up to 60 credits **Postgraduate** (Level 7) Minimum of 15 credits, up to 30 credits	Not applicable - transcript of credit only. The amount and level of credit will vary depending on the module or combinations of modules taken as unprogrammed.	Not applicable - transcript of credit only. The amount and level of credit will vary depending on the module or combination of modules taken as unprogrammed.
Pre-degree (the following awards are subject to validation)			
University Certificate	60	40 @ L4	4
University Diploma	60	40 @ L5	5
University Advanced Diploma	60	60 @ L6	6
Post-experience (the following awards are subject to validation)			
University Professional Certificate	60 - 100	60 @ L5	5
University Professional Diploma	60 - 100	60 @ L6	6
University Advanced Professional Certificate	30 – 45	30 @ L7	7

A Transcript of Credit will be provided for individual modules, groups of modules and short, credit-bearing courses of varying amounts of credit at any level up to 60 credits (UG) or 30 credits (PG). Above these amounts, and subject to validation, small awards may be approved to recognise achievement of 60 credits or more at UG level, or 30 or above at PG level, in line with the credit and level requirements specified above.

6.5   Unprogrammed, Free-standing or CPD Modules

Credit-bearing modules may be approved for the purposes of unprogrammed or free-standing delivery, e.g. for CPD purposes, to be taken by students outside, or in addition to, a formally approved, award-bearing programme. Such modules may be taken from existing, approved awards or may be designed and approved separately for delivery as unprogrammed, free-standing and/or CPD provision. Any credit achieved through the study and assessment of unprogrammed modules will be recognised formally by a transcript of credit.   Unprogrammed or free-standing modules should comply with minimum module credit values of 20 credits (UG) or 15 credits (PG) at levels 4 to 7.   This is especially important where the academic credit derived from unprogrammed modules may be used towards award-bearing provision, at a later stage, through normal credit accumulation and transfer procedures.   Where groups of modules are used for the purposes of creating award-bearing programmes, including 'Small Awards', all general principles of the

Academic Awards Framework (including minimum module sizes for UG and PG) and the University's validation process for award-bearing provision will apply.

6.6   Non-Credit Bearing Activity / Short Courses, Events, Exchanges

This category of non credit-bearing activity may include:

- short training courses
- conferences, workshops, seminars, single day or residential events designed for the purposes of continuing professional development
- 'taster' course, summer schools, other recruitment activities or extended induction programmes for potential applicants/students
- UK, Europe or overseas exchange visits that are not part of a formal, approved course structure

Specific requirements for non-credit bearing short course and other types of activity such as events, workshops, taster programmes, exchanges etc are not defined within the Academic Awards Framework and are not subject to quality processes described within the Academic Quality Framework. Such activities do not lead to academic credit or academic awards and therefore do not form part of formally validated awards as specified by the Academic Awards Framework. On this basis, formal University approval is not required for this type of activity. Business planning, costing, fees and specific resource requirements for this type of non credit-bearing, non award-bearing activity are a matter for local determination by individual faculties' planning groups. Faculties should negotiate with relevant University Directorates in cases where access to specific learning resources (including BlackBoard) is required to support non credit-bearing, non-award bearing activities.

6.7   Definition of Non-Credit Bearing Activity

All of the above types of activity do not constitute part of a formal academic award and therefore require no formal summative assessment leading to the award of academic credit or any other type of academic award. Although the title 'short courses' has been used to describe these activities, it is possible that such activities may vary in length from a day or more to a significant number of weeks. It should be emphasised that such activities cannot lead to either academic credit or an academic award.

6.8   Recognition of Non-Credit Bearing Activity

Faculties may wish to provide a formal letter or certificate of attendance to recognise these types of non-credit bearing activities, events and training sessions. Production of formal certificates of attendance must be agreed with Registry Services who are responsible for the security of all aspects of University certificate production and the use of University logos and/or crest on any certificates provided in recognition of non-credit bearing activities. Certificates of attendance can only be produced according to standard specification by, and with prior permission of, Registry Services.

SECTION 7   RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES: DESIGN PRINCIPLES

7.1   Research Degree Programmes

Research Degree Programmes are individual programmes of guided research designed in accordance with the University's Academic Awards Framework to meet a set of specific aims and objectives. Research Degree Programmes, including Professional Doctorates, are not credit rated at Sheffield Hallam University. Specific outcomes, which must be met by a candidate to be eligible for the award of each type of research degree, are as set out in Section 7.3 below.

7.2   Research Degree Programmes will comprise the following elements:

- An approved title
- A statement of the Aims and Objectives which defines the research problem to be addressed or the hypothesis to be tested
- A supporting programme of related studies or guided reading tailored to the needs of the student, with an emphasis on relevant research methodologies
- A review of existing scholarly work in the field of study, through a review of literature or other work, thus setting the programme in an appropriate disciplinary context
- Collection, analysis and ordering of data relevant to the research, using appropriate methodologies
- Generation of findings from the research process, coherently related to the research problem or hypothesis, evidenced by the relevant data and related to the framework of existing knowledge in the field

And will culminate in:

- The production of a written thesis, supported by artefacts and other media as appropriate, which demonstrates the achievement of the programme's aims and objectives and which is defended at an oral examination.

7.3   Research Degree Outcomes

The following outcomes must be demonstrated by all research degree candidates in order to be eligible for the relevant award to be conferred:

7.3.1   **Masters Degree by Research** will be awarded to successful candidates on the basis of:

- Mastery of an approved research topic or an area of professional practice, correlated with the established field of knowledge and/or professional practice
- Demonstration of competence in research methods appropriate to the field
- Demonstration of achievement of Learning Outcomes at Level 7

7.3.2 **Master of Professional Studies Degree (MProf)*** will be awarded to successful candidates on the basis of:

- Mastery of an approved research topic or an area of advanced professional practice, correlated with the established field of knowledge and/or professional practice
- Demonstration of competence in research methods appropriate to the field
- Demonstration of achievement of Learning Outcomes at Level 7

7.3.3 **Master of Philosophy degree (MPhil)** will be awarded to successful candidates on the basis of:

- Mastery of an approved research topic, correlated with the established field of knowledge
- demonstration of competence in research methods appropriate to the field
- demonstration of achievement Learning Outcomes at L7

7.3.4 **Professional Doctorate (e.g. DBA/DProf)** will be awarded to successful candidates on the basis of:

- Mastery of an approved research topic or an area of advanced professional practice that extends the understanding of an established field of knowledge and/or advanced professional practice
- consolidation of competence in research methods appropriate to the field
- demonstration of achievement of Generic Learning Outcomes at L8

Note on MProf Awards: Candidates who are unable to complete a Professional Doctorate programme, or leave the programme before the final assessment, may apply for an MProf*award provided they have successfully completed 2 years of study and meet all other eligibility criteria for the award of MProf as set out in 7.3.2 above.

7.3.5 **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)** will be awarded to successful candidates on the basis of:

- Mastery of an approved research topic, extending the understanding of an established field of knowledge
- consolidation of competence in research methods appropriate to the field
- demonstration of achievement of Generic Learning Outcomes at L8

7.3.6 **Higher Doctorate award (e.g. DLitt / DEng)** will be awarded to successful candidates on the basis of:

- Demonstration of a major original contribution to the advancement or application of knowledge and the status of the individual as a leading authority in the field of study

7.4 Research Programme Supervision

Research students will be supervised by supervisory teams with appropriate subject expertise, supervisory experience and time to supervise students. The University encourages team supervision but individual supervisors with sufficient expertise and experience may be proposed – this is a matter for local determination.

7.5 Research Programme Duration

Students and their supervisors will determine the expected duration of the programme of research in accordance with the mode of study. In order to protect the integrity and relevance of awards, students will be expected to submit a thesis for examination normally within the following minimum and maximum permissible timescales:

Degree & Mode	Normal minimum permissible time for completion from date of enrolment*	Normal maximum permissible time for completion from date of enrolment[5]
MPhil		
Full-time	18 months	24 months
Part-time	30 months	36 months
PhD (subject to confirmation of registration and including the period of time up to confirmation)		
Full-time	33 months	48 months
Part-time	45 months	84 months
PhD (Direct)		
Full-time	24 months	36 months
Part-time	36 months	60 months
Professional Doctorates		
Full-time	36 months	60 months
Part-time	48 months	84 months

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[5] *Allowing for any period of enforced interruption of study approved via suspension.*

AAF Final Draft v6.1 (18 Nov 2013)

Note:

Section 3, paragraphs 3.6 (Dual and Joint Awards), 3.8 (Programme/Course Management)

and Section 7, 7.5 (Research Programme Duration) are subject to further revision during

2013/14. All revisions to the AAF are subject to approval by the Academic Board.

Approved by: Academic Board 10 December 2013 (Minute AB/13/58)

SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC AWARDS FRAMEWORK

APPENDIX 1

MODELS FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT DELIVERY

Approved by: Academic Board 10 December 2013 (Minute AB/13/58)

MODELS FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT COURSES

APPENDIX 1A: UNDERGRADUATE AWARD CREDIT STRUCTURES

LEVEL 4 : ALL 20 CREDIT MODULES

Option A : 120 credits core (6 x 20)		
Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module

Option B : 100 core credits (5 x 20) with a Language or English for Academic Purposes module substituted for a single named module (1 x 20)		
Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	named module **or** Language or EAP module

LEVEL 5 : ALL 20 CREDIT MODULES

Option A : 120 credits core (6 x 20)

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module

Option B : 100 credits core (5 x 20) and 1 x 20 elective

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option C : 80 credits core (4 x 20) and 2 x 20 electives

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option D : 60 credits core (3 x 20) and 3 x 20 electives

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

LEVEL 5 : 4 X 20 CREDIT MODULES AND 1 X 40 CREDIT MODULE

Option E : 120 credits core (4 x 20 and 1 x 40)		
Credits	C/E	Module
40	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module

Option F : 100 credits core (1 x 40 and 3 x 20) and either 1 x 20 electives		
Credits	C/E	Module
40	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option G : 80 credits core (4 x 20) and either 2 x 20 electives or 1 x 40 elective		
Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
40	E	elective chosen from list

Option H : 80 credits core (2 x 20 and 1 x 40) and 2 x 20 electives		
Credits	C/E	Module
40	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option I : 60 credits core (1 x 20 and 1 x 40) and 3 x 20 credit electives		
Credits	C/E	Module
40	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option J : 60 credits core (3 x 20) and either 1 x 20 and 1 x 40 electives, or 3 x 20 electives		
Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
40	E	elective chosen from list

LEVEL 6 : ALL 20 CREDIT MODULES

Option A : 120 credits core 6 x 20)

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module

Option B : 100 credits (5 x 20) and 1 x 20 credits elective

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option C : 80 credits core (4 x 20) and 2 x 20 electives

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option D : 60 credits core (3 x 20) and 3 x 20 electives

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option E : 40 credits core (2 x 20) and 4 x 20 electives

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

LEVEL 6 : 4 X 20 CREDIT MODULES AND 1 X 40 CREDIT MODULE

Option F : 120 credits core (4 x 20 and 1 x 40)

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
40	C	named module
20	C	named module

Option G : 100 credits core (3 x 20 and 1 x 40) and 1 x 20 elective

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
40	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option H : 80 credits core (4 x 20) and either 2 x 20 electives or 1 x 40 elective

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
40	E	elective chosen from list

Option I : 80 credits core (2 x 20 and 1 x 40) and 2 x 20 electives

Credits	C/E	Module
40	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option J : 60 credits core (3 x 20 credit) and 1 x 40 credit and 1 x 20 credit electives

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
40	E	elective chosen from list

Option K: 60 credits core (1 x 20 credit and 1 x 40 credit) and 3 x 20 credit electives

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
40	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option L: 40 credits core (2 x 20) and either 4 x 20 electives or 2 x 20 elective and 1 x 40

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
40	E	elective chosen from list

Option M : 40 credits core (1 x 40) and 4 x 20 electives

Credits	C/E	Module
40	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

LEVEL 6 : 3 X 20 CREDIT MODULES AND 1 X 60 CREDIT MODULE

Option N : 120 credits core (1 x60 and 3 x 20)

Credits	C/E	Module
60	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module

Option O: 100 credits core (1 x 60 and 2 x 20) and 1 x 20 elective

Credits	C/E	Module
60	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option P: 80 credits core (1 x 60 and 1 x 20) and 2 x 20 electives

Credits	C/E	Module
60	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option Q : 60 credits core (3 x 20 credit) and 3 x 20 credit electives

Credits	C/E	Module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

Option R : 60 credits core (1 x 60 credits) and 3 x 20 credit electives		
Credits	C/E	Module
60	C	named module
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list
20	E	elective chosen from list

APPENDIX 1B: MODELS OF MODES OF DELIVERY FOR UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

Level 4		
Option 1		
20		20
20		20
20		20

Option 2		
20		20
20		20
20		
20		

Option 3		
20		20
20		
20		
20		
20		

Option 4
20
20
20
20
20
20

Level 5		
Option 1		
20		20
20		20
20		20

Option 2		
20		20
20		20
20		
20		

Option 3		
20		20
20		
20		
20		
20		

Option 4
20
20
20
20
20
20

Level 5
Option 5
20
20
20
20
40

Option 6		
20		20
20		20
40		

s

Level 6

Option 1

20		20
20		20
20		20

Option 2

20		20
20		20
20		
20		

Option 3

20		20
20		
20		
20		
20		

Option 4

20
20
20
20
20
20

Level 6

Option 5

20
20
20
20
40

Option 6

20		20
20		20
40		

Option 7

20		60
20		
20		

Option 8

20
20
20
60

Option 9

20		20
20		
60		

APPENDIX 1C: POSTGRADUATE AWARD CREDIT STRUCTURES

Postgraduate Certificate Stage

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Cert stage	15		
	15	15	
	15	15	30
	15	30	30

Postgraduate Diploma Stage

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Dip stage	15		
	15	15	
	15	15	30
	15	30	30

Masters Stage*

	Option A	Option B
Masters stage	15	60
	45	

APPENDIX 1D : DELIVERY OPTIONS FOR FT POSTGRADUATE COURSES

Trimester 1 Cert stage	*Trimester 2* Diploma stage	*Trimester 3* Masters stage

or

Trimester 1 and *Trimester* 2 Cert and Diploma stages	*Trimester* 3 Masters stage

or

Trimester 1 and *Trimester* 2 and *Trimester* 3 Cert and Diploma and Masters stages

APPENDIX 1E: JOINT DEGREES, MAJOR-MINOR DEGREES, AND ROUTES

Joint degrees		
Level 4	Subject A 50% (60 credits)	Subject B 50% (60 credits)
Level 5	Subject A 50% (60 credits)	Subject B 50% (60 credits)
Level 6	Subject A 50% (60 credits)	Subject B 50% (60 credits)

Major-Minor Degrees		
Level 4	Subject A (80 credits)	Subject B (40 credits)
	or Subject A (100 credits)	Subject B (20 credits)
	or Subject A (120 credits)	Subject B (0 credits)
Level 5	Subject A (80 credits)	Subject B (40 credits)
Level 6	Subject A (80 credits)	Subject B (40 credits)

Degrees with Routes	
Level 4	No credits required from route electives
Level 5	Minimum 20 credits required from named route
Level 6	Minimum 40 credits required from named route
	Total minimum required from named route at levels 5 and 6 = 80 credits
Level 7	Minimum 60 credits required from named route including at least 15 credits from a taught module

APPENDIX 1F: INTEGRATED MASTERS AWARDS

Integrated Masters	
Level 4	As for undergraduate framework
Level 5	As for undergraduate framework
Level 6	As for undergraduate framework
Level 7 / Option 1	As for undergraduate framework Level 6, but modules ring-fenced to the Integrated Masters award and cannot be offered as part of any other taught pg programme
Level 7 / Option 2	As for postgraduate framework (15, 30, 45 or 60 credit modules)

Academic Awards Framework

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Core Module
Core modules are those which a student must pass in order to achieve a named award. The relationship between the learning outcomes of core modules and the overall programme learning outcomes is considered and approved at validation. Core modules may be compensated (unless an exemption from Standard Assessment Regulations has been approved) but cannot be substituted. Students are permitted one re-registration on a core module.

Course or Programme
At Sheffield Hallam University, the terms 'programme' and 'course' are used interchangeably and this is reflected in the Academic Awards Framework. For clarity, the following definition, taken from the QAA Quality Code, applies to both terms:

'*[the term] programme is used to describe any stand-alone, approved curriculum followed by a student, which carries academic credit or otherwise contributes to an award of the degree-awarding body. The provision may be of any length or credit value, and includes pre-defined programmes leading to a specific qualification, multidisciplinary programmes, pathways through a modular scheme, short periods of study leading to the award of academic credit, as well as programmes where the specific content is negotiated between the higher education provider and an individual student.*' (Quality Code, B1, Programme Design and Approval, QAA, 2013)

Credit
Credit is awarded to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level. A number of credits is assigned to each module, which indicates the amount of learning undertaken and a specified credit level indicates the relative depth of learning involved. Together, these are known as the credit value of a module.

Dual Degree
Dual degrees (also known as double or multiple awards) are defined by the QAA as arrangements where two or more awarding bodies together provide a single jointly delivered programme (or programmes) leading to separate awards (and separate certification) being granted by both, or all, of them (see QAA Quality Code, Chapter B10).

Elective Module
Modules which may be chosen from a limited list, specific to a course and approved at validation. Elective modules also contribute to the overall programme learning outcomes. The elective list may change from year to year and modules can be added or removed throughout the time a course is operational. Any such amendments to the agreed list of electives, subsequent to a validation, are subject to approval. Elective modules may be compensated or substituted.

Intermediate Award
A set of standard intermediate awards must be available within all programmes as defined within the Academic Awards Framework (See AAF, Awards Table, Section 2). Intermediate awards, at each relevant stage of a course, must have a defined set of aims and learning outcomes approved at validation. Intermediate (lower level) awards are not routinely conferred at each stage whilst a student is accumulating credit and progressing towards a higher level 'target' award as part of the same programme of study.

Joint Award
Joint awards are defined by the QAA as arrangements under which two or more awarding bodies together provide a programme leading to a single award made jointly by both, or all, participants. A single certificate or document (signed by the competent authorities) attests to the successful completion of the jointly delivered programme, replacing separate institutional or national qualifications (see QAA Quality Code, Chapter B10).

Joint Honours Degree
A joint honours degree award comprises two different academic subject areas / disciplines in approximately equal proportions by credit value. Note that joint honours degrees are awarded by the University alone and are distinct from 'Joint Awards' offered in collaboration with another awarding body (see above).

Learning Outcome
What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning'[6].

Level
An indicator of the relative complexity, demand and/or depth of learning and of learner autonomy (i.e. at SHU, academic credit is assigned at levels 4, 5, 6, 7).

Major/Minor Honours Degree
A major-minor honours degree comprises two different academic subject areas / disciplines and must consist of 80 credits in the major subject and 40 credits in the minor subject at both levels 5 and 6.

Module
A self-contained, formally structured, learning experience with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. A number of credits is assigned to each module to indicate the amount of learning undertaken (see notional study hours) and a specified credit level indicates the relative depth of learning involved. Together, these are known as the credit value of a module.

Non-credit Bearing Activity
Activities which do not constitute part of a formal academic award and therefore require no formal summative assessment leading to the award of academic credit or any other type of academic award. Although the title 'short courses' has been used to describe these activities, it is possible that such activities may vary in length from a day or more to a significant number of weeks. Such activities cannot lead to either academic credit or an academic award.

Notional Study Hours
Notional study hours are the anticipated hours of study which will be required, on average, for a student to successfully study and complete a module. These are based on 10 notional study hours per academic credit, e.g. 200 hours per 20 credits. A typical full time undergraduate year of 120 credits will require 1200 notional study hours.

Pre-requisite Module
Where academically appropriate and necessary, there may be a formal pre-requisite relationship specified between modules, requiring the study of the prerequisite before a student can proceed on to study the related module. If a module is to be a formal pre-requisite for the study of another module then this must be specified in the course structure and approved at validation.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
RPL is the process for recognising previous learning that has taken place in informal, formal or non-formal contexts: for example, in the workplace and through life experiences or through certificated learning which has been formally assessed by another HE provider. Once recognised through this process, prior learning can be used to gain credit or exemption for qualifications, and/or for personal and career development.

Validation
A peer review process by which the University ensures that all its academic provision is academically coherent and current, meets University standards and offers a high quality student experience. To achieve this aim, all new University taught courses and modules are

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[6]

subject to validation before they can be offered to students.