Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework

Introduction

1. The Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework (QMACF) is a College policy that provides a structure for all modules and programmes leading to taught awards of the College or University of London.

2. The QMACF is effective from September 2008. The regulations covering progression, award and other relevant factors are detailed in the College’s Academic Regulations.

Definitions

3. Terms used in the QMACF are defined as follows:

   **Academic credit:** An indicator of the amount and level of learning. Given in multiples of 15.

   **Academic level:** The relative complexity, depth of study, and learner autonomy required in relation to a module in the context of its discipline. Each module shall be assigned a level from the following scale:
   - Level 3: Foundation or pre-degree level (previously level 0)
   - Level 4: Introductory (previously level 1)
   - Level 5: Intermediate (previously level 2)
   - Level 6: Final (previously level 3)
   - Level 7: Masters (previously level M)
   - Level 8: Research level

   **Advanced standing:** Prior, certificated study from another institution deemed equivalent to QM modules from which exemption is sought.

   **Award:** Undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate certificates, diplomas, bachelors degrees (with and without honours), and undergraduate and postgraduate masters degrees. The awards offered by QM are detailed in the *Ordinances* and the *Academic Regulations*.

   **Compulsory module:** A module that must be taken to meet requirements for progression or award.

   **Core module:** A module that must be taken and passed to meet requirements for progression or award. Core modules cannot be condoned.

   **Co-requisite module:** A module that must be taken at the same time as another, specified, module.

   **Module:** An approved block of teaching and learning leading to the award of academic credit and forming part of a programme of study. 'Module' also refers to course, course unit, subject, or any equivalent approved unit of assessed teaching.
**Notional study hours:** The number of hours required to complete an academic credit, module, or programme.

**Overlapping module:** A module that has similar content to another module and cannot be taken if the other module is taken.

**Pre-requisite module:** A specified module that must be taken before a second specified module can be taken.

**Programme of study (programme):** A package of modules approved by Senate, or its delegated authority, and leading to an award of QM or the University of London.

**Total credit value:** The total amount of academic credit required for an award.

**Scope**

4. The QMACF 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 the QMACF.

**Relationship to Academic Regulations**

5. QMACF informs curriculum design and structure and the way in which the College understands and expresses its academic standards. The QMACF is reflected in the College’s Academic Regulations and in programme and module regulations.

6. Programme and module regulations determine those modules that a student may or may not select as a part of his/her programme.

**Exceptions**

7. Exceptions to the QMACF are approved by Senate, or its delegated authority, through the programme and module approval processes.

**Notional study**

8. Notional study hours represent the entirety of student effort required to undertake and complete a module; this includes all aspects of learning and teaching activity such as classroom based activities, self-directed learning, coursework assessments, preparations for invigilated assessment, practical work, labs and clinical skills practise.

9. The notional study hours for each academic credit point is 10. A 15 credit point module represents 150 notional study hours. An academic year of undergraduate study equates to 1200 hours of full time study and an academic year of postgraduate study equates to 1800 hours of full time study.

**Module size**

10. The minimum size for a module is normally 15 academic credit points. Larger modules may be developed provided that they are of a size that is a multiple of 15. For undergraduate programmes the maximum module size is 60 academic credit points. For
postgraduate programmes, the maximum module size for a taught module is 60 academic credit points and 120 academic credit points for the dissertation.

**Designation of modules**

11. Modules may be approved so that they are designated as core or compulsory which means that they are a specified requirement for progression and/or award.

12. A module may be approved that is designated as pre-requisite where it must be taken before the next specified module is taken.

13. A module may be approved that is designated as co-requisite where it must be taken at the same time as another specified module.

14. Overlapping modules may be identified to specify similar modules that cannot both be taken.

**Academic level**

15. 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.

16. Each approved module has one academic level. Where more than one module share significant elements of content and teaching, 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.

17. Where it is academically desirable, programmes may be designed so that students are able to take modules at different academic levels in the same developmental year.

18. The academic levels used at QMUL are the national levels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Old QMUL level (for information only)</th>
<th>National level (from Sept 2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundation level (pre-degree)</td>
<td>Level 0</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate Level</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Level</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honours Level</td>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Level 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Level</td>
<td>Level M</td>
<td>Level 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Level</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Level 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment

19. All assessment for a programme is organised within modules and is designed to test the learning outcomes for the module in question.

Award of academic credit

20. The award of academic credit relates to achievement in individual modules. Academic credit is awarded to candidates who have met the requirements to pass the module in question.

21. The academic credit awarded is that approved for the module; the amount of academic credit awarded does not vary in accordance with the level of achievement. The level of achievement is reflected by the Module Mark.

22. Where a student is required to retake a module, the Academic Regulations prescribe the arrangements for the award of academic credit: the academic credit either replaces the credit for the original take or may be awarded in addition to that for the original take.

23. It is possible for academic credit to be annulled where the Academic Regulations provide for it.

Award of academic credit in instances of failure

24. It is possible to award academic credit in the event of module failure where the Academic Regulations provide for it. The outcome is known as ‘fail condoned, academic credit awarded’.

Advanced standing

25. The Academic Regulations make provision for admission with advanced standing. Advanced standing is quantified in terms of academic credit to ensure that the overall academic credit requirements for award are met.

26. Double counting occurs where credit that has contributed to an award is used to gain advanced standing for a QMUL programme leading to an award at the same academic level. Normally, double counting is not permitted.

Intercalated programmes

27. Programmes designated by Senate, or its delegated authority as intercalated are only available to students undertaking MB, BS, BDS, or BMedVet. These programmes allow for advanced standing for the first two years of the programme, 240 academic credit points. These academic credit points are also counted towards the requirements for award for MB, BS and BDS. The intercalated year does not count towards the academic credit requirements for MB, BS or BDS.

European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS)

28. Where academic credit awarded by QM is to be converted to ECTS, this occurs on the basis of one QMACF academic credit point being the equivalent to 0.5ECTS regardless of the academic level of the academic credit. The academic level and mark are not
converted. Incoming ECTS are incorporated in accordance with the requirements for the programme, and where applicable, the collaboration.

**Transcripts**

29. Transcripts provide details of modules taken by students, the academic level, module mark achieved and academic credit awarded.

**Academic credit requirements for award**

30. 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main higher education awards</th>
<th>Academic level of award</th>
<th>FTE period of study</th>
<th>Normal total credit value</th>
<th>Range of academic levels</th>
<th>Normal maximum credit at lowest level</th>
<th>Normal minimum credit at level of award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate of higher education (Cert HE)</td>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Levels 3, 4 and 5</td>
<td>120 at level 4 which may include 30 at level 3</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE)</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>Levels 4 and 5</td>
<td>150 at level 4 which may include 30 at level 3</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Degree (FdSc or FdA)</td>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>Levels 4 and 5</td>
<td>150 at level 4 which may include 30 at level 3</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honours degree</td>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>3 or 4 years</td>
<td>360 to 480&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Levels 4, 5 and 6</td>
<td>150 at level 4 which may include 30 at level 3</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Certificate</td>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Levels 4, 5 and 6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> Takes account of programmes that include a compulsory year abroad or placement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Academic level of award</th>
<th>FTE period of study</th>
<th>Normal total credit value</th>
<th>Range of academic levels</th>
<th>Normal maximum credit at lowest level</th>
<th>Normal minimum credit at level of award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Levels 4, 5 and 6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated masters (MEng/MSci)</td>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>Levels 4, 5,6 and 7</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate programmes in SMD - BDS/MBBS</td>
<td>Level 6 (with the three clinical years being at level 6)</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>Levels 4, 5 and 6</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate</td>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Levels 5, 6 and 7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate diploma</td>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>8 months</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Levels 5, 6 and 7</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters degree (MA, MSc, LLM, MBA and MRes)</td>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>One year</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Levels 5, 6 and 7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree designated Euromasters</td>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>Levels 5, 6 and 7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MClinDent</td>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>Levels 6 and 7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approved by Senate (previously known as Academic Board): 6 December 2007

Amended by Senate: (to increase the normal minimum credit at level of award for the integrated masters programmes and to include provision for level 8 study) Senate, 8 March 2012
Major, Minor and Joint Degree Programmes

[a] Programmes may be developed that comprise more than one subject. The balance of subjects may be organised so that the overall programme is delivered on a major/minor or joint basis. The maximum number of subjects that may be combined to achieve a given named programme is normally two however, where the programme regulations permit, a student may take modules from a wider range of subject areas. Exceptionally a programme may be developed that incorporates three subjects where all three subjects are reflected in the name of the award.

[b] Programmes may include alternative award names (eg Economic Studies instead of Economics) that are conferred on students where the core/compulsory requirement is not met for the principal programme and award name. Any such award names must be detailed in the programme specification for the principal programme and approved through the prescribed procedure.

[c] A student registers for an approved programme of study. A student wishing to transfer to a different programme of study (named award) should do so following the relevant procedure. Transfer may occur at any time up to the point of award but not after the award has been approved by the DEB. Awards using titles that are not approved may not be made unless through suspension of regulations.

[d] Taught Programmes Board may approve special programmes of study and named awards for individual students where the proposed combination of subjects is not an approved programme of the College but it is desirable for that student to take the special combination. In these cases the relevant form should be completed detailing the proposed special programme and the rules for major, minor and joint options should be followed.

[e] In developing undergraduate curricula, subjects are combined according to the following rules to provide for major, minor and joint options:

[f] Major comprises a minimum of 180 academic credit points or half the curriculum of which at least 30 academic credits are at the level of the award. The major comprises those core and compulsory modules detailed in the programme specification.

[g] Minor comprises a minimum of 90 academic credit points or one quarter of the curriculum of which at least 15 academic credit points are at the level of the award. The minor comprises those core and compulsory modules detailed in the programme specification.

[h] Joint comprises a minimum of 120 academic credit points or one third of the curriculum from each subject area of which at least 15 academic credit points are from each subject area is at the level of the award. The joint programme comprises those core and compulsory modules detailed in the programme specification.
[i] **Three subject joint** comprises a minimum of 90 academic credit points or one quarter of the curriculum from each of the three subject areas of which at least 15 academic credit points from each subject area are at the level of the award. The three subject joint programme comprises those core and compulsory modules detailed in the programme specification.

[j] **Single honours** are those programmes that are approved as a single entity. A single honours may comprise one subject or may reflect a combination of subjects presented as an integrated whole. The title of a single honours award reflects the nature of the programme’s curriculum and outcomes; it does not need to follow the conventions identified above but should normally include some study at the level of the award in any named subject.

[k] For major/minor programmes the major subject is listed first in the name of the award and the conjunction ‘with’ is used. For joint programmes, the conjunction ‘and’ is used with the two subjects normally listed alphabetically in the name of the award unless there is a specific academic rationale for a different order. For three subject joint programmes, the subjects are listed in alphabetical order unless there is a specific academic rationale for a different order with a comma separating the first two subjects and the conjunction ‘and’ used before the listing of the third subject.