

Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework

Introduction

1. The Queen Mary Academic Credit Framework (QMACF) provides a structure for all modules and programmes leading to taught awards of QMUL or the University of London.
2. The QMACF outlines the levels of relevant aspects of a programme in line with the 2008 QAA Frameworks for Higher Education in England and Wales¹, and therefore aligns to the national standards.
3. This iteration of the QMACF is effective from 1 August 2017 and provides an update to the QMACF 2015. The Regulations covering progression, award, and other relevant factors are detailed in the Academic Regulations.
4. This document is intended to provide information about the QMACF to students, academic staff and professional staff. Any queries should be addressed in the first instance to the Academic Registry and Council Secretariat (ARCS).

Scope

5. QMUL expresses the structure of most of its taught programmes in terms of credits. For each programme, a tariff of credits is assigned to indicate the volume of learning.
6. 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 the Academic Regulations

7. The QMACF informs curriculum design and structure and the way in which QMUL understands and expresses its academic standards. The QMACF is reflected in the Academic Regulations and in programme and module regulations.
8. In order to be eligible for an award of QMUL or the University of London, a student must take an approved programme of study, obtain a specified number of credits - the number required depending on the award in question - and meet any other requirements specified for the programme.
9. Programme and module regulations determine those modules that students may or may not select as a part of their programmes.

Exceptions

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

¹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2718#.VQlhfo6sWNg>

Notional Study

11. 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, laboratory work, and clinical skills practise.
12. Each credit point is equivalent to 10 hours. A 5 credit point module represents 50 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

13. The QMUL standard minimum value for a module is 5 academic credit points. Larger modules may be developed; the following are permitted values: 5 (QMUL Model modules, only), 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 45, 60, 90, 120.
14. Modules offered on undergraduate programmes have a maximum value of 60 academic credit points. For postgraduate programmes, the maximum value for a taught module is 60 academic credit points and 120 academic credit points for a dissertation or research project.

Designation of modules

15. In a set of programme regulations, modules may be designated as core or compulsory. This means that they are a specified requirement for progression and/or award.
16. In a set of programme regulations, modules may be approved as pre-requisite whereby they must be taken before the next specified module is taken.
17. In a set of programme regulations, two or more modules may be approved as co-requisites, whereby they must be taken at the same time as each other.
18. Overlapping modules may be identified to specify similar modules that cannot both be taken.

Academic level

19. 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.
20. For each approved module there is one academic level. Where significant elements of content and teaching are shared by more than one module, each module is approved separately at the appropriate academic level. Each module should be distinguished by different learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessment that reflect the academic level.

21. Where it is academically desirable and compliant with the relevant award rules, programmes may be designed so that students are able take modules at different academic levels in the same developmental year.
22. A minimum of three quarters of the credits taken in each developmental year must be at the directly corresponding academic level.

Assessment

23. All assessment for a programme is organised within modules and is designed to test the learning outcomes for the module separately.

Award of academic credit

24. 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.
25. 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.
26. Where a student is required to first take a module, the Academic Regulations prescribe the arrangements for the award of academic credit: the academic credit replaces the credit for the original take.
27. It is possible for academic credit to be revoked where the Academic Regulations provide for it.

Award of academic credit in instances of failure

28. It is possible to award academic credit in the event of module failure, where the Academic Regulations provide for this. The outcome is recorded as 'fail condoned, academic credit awarded'.

Advanced standing

29. 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 are met.
30. Credit that has contributed to a previous award cannot normally be used to gain advanced standing for a QMUL programme.

Academic credit requirements for award

31. 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.

Intercalated programmes

32. Intercalated programmes allow students enrolled on a programme to be admitted to study for a one-year intercalated BSc or BMedSci, and to re-enter the original programme the following year.
33. Programmes designated as intercalated by Senate, or its delegated authority are only available to students undertaking MBBS, BDS, or BMedVet programmes. Intercalated programmes allow for advanced standing for the first two years of the programme (240 academic credit points). Those academic credit points are also counted towards the requirements for award for MBBS and BDS. The intercalated year does not count towards the academic credit requirements for MBBS or BDS.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

34. ECTS is based on the principle that 60 ECTS credits are equivalent to the learning outcomes and associated workload of a typical full-time academic year of formal learning. In everyday practice, two UK credits are equivalent to one ECTS credit. For the award of ECTS credits, the learning outcomes of a qualification must be consistent with the relevant outcomes set out by QMUL.
35. Where academic credit awarded by QMUL is to be converted to ECTS, this occurs on the basis of one QMACF academic credit point being the equivalent to 0.5 ECTS 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 of the programme, and where applicable the collaboration.

Transcripts

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

Award	Academic level of award	FTE period of study	Normal total credit value	Range of academic levels	Normal maximum credit taken at lowest level	Normal minimum credit taken at level of award
Foundation Certificate (FdCert)	3	1 year	120	3	120	120
Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	4	1 year	120	4	120 at Level 4 (≤30 at Level 3 permitted within this)	90
Foundation Degree (FdA/FdSc)	5	2 years	240	4-5	150 at Level 4 (≤30 at Level 3 permitted within this)	90
Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)	5	2 years	240	4-5	150 at Level 4 (≤30 at Level 3 permitted within this)	90
Bachelor's Degree (BA, BSc, BSc (Eng), BSc (Econ), BMedSci, BEng, LLB ¹)	6	3-4 years ²	360-420 ²	4-6	150 at Level 4 (≤30 at Level 3 permitted within this)	90
Integrated Masters Degree (MEng, MSci)	7	4 years	480	4-7	150 at Level 4 (≤30 at Level 3 permitted within this)	120
Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)	7	5 years	600	4-7	120	240
Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS)	7	5 years	600	4-7	120	240
Graduate Certificate (GradCert)	6	4 months	60	6	60	60
Graduate Diploma (GradDip)	6	8 months	120	4-6	30	90

Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)	7	4 months	60	5-7	15	45
Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)	7	8 months	120	5-7	15	90
Masters Degree (MA, MBA, MPA, MSc, LLM, MRes)	7	1 year	180	5-7	15	150
Masters Degree designated Euromasters	7	2 years	240	6-7	30	210
Master of Clinical Dentistry (MClinDent)	7	2 years	360	5-7	30	330
Professional Doctorates (DClinDent, DClinPsy)	8	3 years	540 (270 taught, 270 research notional credit ³)	7-8	180	360

¹ Excepting the LLB Senior Status, a two-year 270 credit award at academic level six.

² Takes account of programmes that include a compulsory year abroad or placement.

³ Credits are not normally offered for research at Level 8, and therefore notional credits are used for the framework. Further details can be found for Professional Doctorates within the QMUL Framework for Professional Doctorates.

Glossary of terms

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

Academic Level: refers to 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
- Level 4: Introductory
- Level 5: Intermediate
- Level 6: Final
- Level 7: Masters
- Level 8: Research level

Academic year: A period running from 1 August to 31 July. The developmental years of most undergraduate programmes follow academic years, and policies and regulations are normally written by academic year. See also *developmental year*, and *calendar year*.

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 QMUL are detailed in the *Ordinances* and the *Academic Regulations*.

Calendar year: A twelve month period. Many Masters programmes run for a full calendar year, which may cross two academic years. See also *academic year*, *developmental year*.

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

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

Delegated authority: Where the authority invested in an individual or body is delegated to another individual or body for a specified purpose.

Developmental year: A year of a programme. Normally one academic year of full time study, during which a student is normally required to be registered for 120 credits of modules. Developmental years for part time students normally last two years. See also *academic year* and *calendar year*.

Dissertation, project, research project: An extended piece of independent study assessed by an output report or extended essay. The dissertation or project comprises a significant part of most Masters programmes.

Module Assessment: Assessment of the performance of a student on a module. This may include a variety of elements and forms, including coursework, dissertations, and practical assignments.

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.

Module mark: The overall module result. This may be an aggregate of marks from several elements of assessment, which may be weighted. It is held to one decimal place.

Notional study hours: The number of hours required to complete an academic credit, module, or programme.

Pathway: A specific combination of modules within a programme leading to a named award.

Pre-requisite module: A specified module that must be taken before the next specified module is taken.

Programme regulations: The regulations for an individual programme of study, approved by Senate or its delegated authority.

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

Progression: The process of moving from one developmental year to the next, or from the taught element to the dissertation or project element of a programme.

Research students: Students registered for a programme of study specifically designated as a research programme. Research programmes have separate *Academic Regulations*.

Students: Students of QMUL. Ordinance C1 describes 'those persons who are students of QMUL and associate students of QMUL'. The *Academic Regulations* apply to all students undertaking undergraduate or postgraduate study at QMUL, and to any persons who Senate declares to be a student of QMUL.

Taught Component: The parts of a programme delivered as taught modules, as opposed to dissertations or projects. The term is generally used in relation to postgraduate programmes.

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