The University of Sussex Academic Framework 2024/25

1. Introduction

1.1 The Academic Framework establishes the criteria and rules for courses leading to awards of the University of Sussex. It sets out the basic criteria for awards by establishing the design parameters necessary to assure the quality and academic standing of those courses in accordance with the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in England, Northern Ireland and Wales (FHEQ) – 2nd edition (2024), Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) (Ofqual 2015), the Higher Education Credit Framework for England: guidance on academic credit arrangements in higher education in England (revised 2021), and the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (revised 2018).

1.2 Course-specific regulations may, following approval granted through the University's curriculum development processes, set additional requirements for the award of named degrees, diplomas and certificates and for which the requirements may be more stringent than those set out in this document, for example to meet the requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB).

2. Credit

2.1 The unit of measurement of time and workload for modules and courses is a credit. Credit is determined by calculating the required learning hours on the basis of 1 credit for 10 hours of learning. The credit volume reflects all student effort including taught provision, independent or guided study, and revision.

2.2 Credit is awarded to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level for a complete module. Credit is a quantified means of expressing equivalence of learning and enables comparing learning achieved in a variety of different contexts. The credit volume reflects the notional student effort required to complete a module successfully.

2.2 Taught awards of the University comprise a sequence of credit rated modules to the values specified in Appendix 1.

3. Qualification Descriptors

3.1 The

University's Academic Framework. All electives shall be weighted as 15 credits.

Electives may exist as an individual module or as part of a 60 or 90-credit Minor Pathway. Electives are not available to students on Joint Honours courses as there is insufficient capacity within the syllabus if two major subject areas are to be adequately accommodated.

Electives may be offered in each teaching semester, depending upon demand. Electives must be approved by University Education Committee

have defined learning outcomes at levels 3 to 7 which align to stages of study. Where a module is offered at more than one credit level it must be separately presented and must have clearly differentiated assessment and learning outcomes.

Credit Values

6.5 Credits are module specific and awarded upon completion of the module. All modules contributing to an award must be credit-bearing. Undergraduate courses comprise 120 credits per academic year for students studying full-time (see Appendix 1). For full-time undergraduate courses the usual pattern of delivery will be 60 credits in the Autumn Semester and 60 credits in the Spring Semester.

6.6 The undergraduate final year project is expected to comprise at least 30 credits at Level 6.

6.7 Modules may be delivered within a single semester or across two semesters. If the primary assessment is not a project, a dissertation, or other research-based assessment, then there must be a strong pedagogic rationale for extended teaching and learning for the module topic. Requests for year-long non-research modules must be formally approved by the Chair of the School Education Committee. The School Education Committee is responsible for ensuring learning opportunities, feedback, assessment, and other workload is spread across both semesters. Where a module is delivered across two semesters, the minimum credit volume will be 30 credits. Modules weighted at 15 credits will not be delivered across two semesters as this leads to increased incompatibility with other courses and can lead to inefficient delivery models.

Modules at Lower and Higher Levels

6.8 Students may take up to 30 credits at the lower level as indicated by the credit requirements for the award above through requesting a Variation of Study. This is not permitted for students in the final stage of an Integrated Master's degree where all 120 credits must be at Level 7. On undergraduate language courses, students may exceptionally take 30 credits at FHEQ Level 3 during Stage 1 of their studies, to enable entry to study of a language at the level.

6.9 Students are not permitted to take any credits at the higher level in any stage in an undergraduate course, with two exceptions:

60-credit Language Pathways	As for other 60-credit pathways, with the following exceptions: • Year 1 students may study modules at FHEQ Level 3, in order to obtain teaching at the level. • The pathway may include modules taken during a Foundation Year (NOTE: these modules will contribute to the achievement of the pathway title but the credit achieved for them will not count towards the credit requirement of the bachelor's award). • Language elective modules forming part of a pathway may be delivered in Stage 3 where this complements a particular pattern of delivery, for example where a student is away from campus during a placement period or to enable entry to study a language at the level. • The pathway may be constituted entirely of modules at level 4 (but with appropriate progression between levels as defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)). In relation to languages the award certificate shall be recorded as "Degree title with proficiency in 'language' (intermediate)" where the language has been taken at FHEQ Levels 3 and 4 and "Degree title with proficiency in 'language' (advanced)" where the language has been taken at Level 4 or higher. The School will obtain approval for the pathway exit title from the University's Portfolio Approval Committee (PAC).
90-credit Pathway	A 90-credit Pathway consists of a cohesive course of study that provides academic progression with 30 credits achieved at each of FHEQ Levels 4, 5 and 6. Optionality within 90-credit pathways will not usually be permitted. The aim of the 90-credit Pathway is to provide students on single honours courses with an opportunity to broaden their learning beyond the main focus of their course. The 90-credit Pathway shall consist of sufficient academic credit to warrant specific recognition on the degree certificate as a minor component of a major/minor award, following the titling convention for that type of degree award. The title of the award will be approved in all instances by the Portfolio Approval Committee. All major/minor degrees at the University will utilise a 90-credit Pathway for their minor component. These pathways shall be made available to students taking Single Honours degrees that opt into the Elective Scheme and shall be delivered within the University's Elective Timetable for the first two Stages. For students not entering the University on a specified major/minor award title, progression into Stage 3 of the pathway will be dependent on there being sufficient capacity within the relevant stage of their course. Students will be required to obtain explicit approval for this variation of study.

7.5 Taught postgraduate courses will normally have at least 60 credits of core modules that are aligned to the award title.

7.6 Individual postgraduate level modules may contribute to more than one course, but the credit volume and level of the module shall be the same for all courses. Cross-school delivery of modules is permitted for postgraduate courses.

7.7 Exceptionally, two modules offered at different FHEQ levels may be co-taught. Where this occurs the shared teaching element, must be at the lower level with an equivalent proportion of teaching delivered independently to the student studying at the higher level. In addition, both modules must have differentiated titles, learning outcomes and assessments. Exceptionally, alternative arrangements may be approved by the University Education Committee.

7.8 Postgraduate level modules will either be classified as core or option. Elective modules are not offered at the postgraduate level as there is insufficient capacity within postgraduate award to accommodate broader choice without compromising academic integrity of the award.

8. Periods of Registration

8.1 Once a student has registered on an award, they are required to complete the award within

Award Title (abbreviated form in brackets)	FHEQ/RQF Level	Minimum Credit requirement	Minimum Credit at the level of the award	Minimum Period of Registration	Maximum Period of Registration	Award description and rules
Professional Doctorates: Doctorate in Education (EdD) Doctorate in Social Work (DSW) Doctorate in Medicine (MD)	8	540[3]	360	4yrs PT	TBC	This award is a research degree which also contains a substantial taught element. Assessment is by taught modules in the first year and then by submission of a thesis, (length determined by the School) and an oral examination (the viva voce or viva).
Professional Doctorate by Published Works: Doctorate in Medicine (MD by Published Works)	8	N/A	N/A	1yr FT	TBC	This award requires the submission of a portfolio of published works and an oral examination (the viva voce or viva).
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)	7	N/A	N/A	1yr FT 2 yrs PT	3 yrs FT 6 yrs PT	This is a research degree, the completion of which requires the submission of a thesis (word length determined by the School) and an oral examination (the or 'viva').
Master of Laws by Research (LLM by Research)	7	180	180	1yr FT	TBC	Typically delivered over a single academic year (12-month period), comprising a supervised research dissertation. Taught modules will not form part of the award.
Master's Degree: Master of Arts (MA) Master of Business Administration (MBA) Master of Education (MEd) Master of Laws (LLM) Master of Science (MSc)	7	180	150	1yr FT 2yrs PT 2yrs ODL	2yrs FT 4yrs PT 4yrs ODL	Typically delivered over a single academic year (12-month period) for FT, or over two academic years (24-month period) for PT/online provision and incorporating a research dissertation which is normally weighted at 60 credits.

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Award Title (abbreviated form in brackets)	FHEQ/RQF Level	Minimum Credit requirement	Minimum Credit at the level of the award	Minimum Period of Registration	Maximum Period of Registration	Award description and rules
						incorporate at least 60 credits (with 30 credits at level 5). The pathway does not constitute a named entry route as it is designed to facilitate student choice after entry. Where students successfully complete a 60-credit pathway alongside their single honours, the subject of the pathway will not appear in the degree title. Instead, the pathway will usually be recognised on the degree certificate outside of the degree title, using the format '<Main area of study> (with <pathway name> Studies)'. Students progressing from a foundation year may incorporate two pathways into their degree. The pathways will be recognised on the degree certificate outside the degree title, using the format '<Main area of study> (with <pathway name> Studies and <pathway name> Studies)'.
Bachelor's Degree with Honours (Hons) (BA, BEng, BMus, BSc, LLB) Major (with Minor)	6	360	60 (major) 30 (minor)	3yrs FT	60 1 445.6	

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Award Title (abbreviated form in brackets)	FHEQ/RQF Level	Minimum Credit requirement	Minimum Credit at the level of the award	Minimum Period of Registration	Maximum Period of Registration	Award description and rules
						undertake a voluntary placement year or a Study Abroad Year. When taken and passed the summer placements shall be recognised on the degree certificate in the format MChem Chemistry with Summer Research Placements.
Integrated Master's with Industrial Placement Year: Master of Chemistry (MChem)	7					

Award Title (abbreviated form in brackets)	FHEQ/RQF Level	Minimum Credit requirement	Minimum Credit at the level of the award	Minimum Period of Registration	Maximum Period of Registration	Award description and rules
						must not be used for placements involving private sector organisations.
Award with study abroad year (voluntary/integrated)	(5)	(120)	(120)	1yr FT		

Award Title (abbreviated form in brackets)	FHEQ/RQF Level	Minimum Credit requirement	Minimum Credit at the level of the award	Minimum Period of Registration	Maximum Period of Registration	Award description and rules
						students enter with 120 credits at level 4 are recognised through RPL.
Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE)	4	120	90	1yr FT 2yr PT	5yr FT 7yr PT	This is an entry award only, for courses delivered at West Dean College of Arts and Conservation.
Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	4	120	90	1yr FT	N/A	This award may be approved as an exit award only. The name of the award appearing on the award certificate shall be Certificate of Higher Education without reference to a subject of study.
University of Sussex Certificate of Education	(3)	120	90	1yr FT	N/A	This is not a formally recognised award but an exit certificate of achievement for students successfully completing a Foundation Year but who decide not to progress on to, or subsequently withdraw from, undergraduate study.
Foundation Year	3	120	120	1yr FT	N/A	This entry route is for applicants who do not meet the threshold for direct entry into Year 1 of undergraduate courses. Following successful completion of the Foundation Year, students may progress to a named undergraduate course.

Review/Contacts/References	
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