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## Background

1. This document provides guidelines on the structure of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes and is intended to support colleagues in developing a new programme or amending an existing programme. It is informed by the HE Quality Code Advice and Guidance on Course Design and Development. The guidelines should be read in conjunction with [guidance](#) on the learning design process.
2. Henley's Post-experience programmes are not within the scope of these provisions and continue on the models for programmes approved prior to the Portfolio Review. Consideration will be given in due course to their possible inclusion in the Guidelines.
3. Please contact the following members of staff with any queries:
  - the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean or School Director of Teaching and Learning;
  - for matters relating to specific/technical programme requirements: Rosie Pursey ([r.l.k.brown@reading.ac.uk](mailto:r.l.k.brown@reading.ac.uk)), Andrew Carlton ([a.carlton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:a.carlton@reading.ac.uk)), or Milly Holland ([m.holland@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.holland@reading.ac.uk)) or, in the case of Henley programmes, Geraldine Mak ([p.mak@henley.ac.uk](mailto:p.mak@henley.ac.uk)) or Claire Steadman ([claire.steadman@henley.ac.uk](mailto:claire.steadman@henley.ac.uk));
  - for matters relating to the Curriculum Framework and pedagogical design: Dr Nina Brooke ([n.m.brooke@reading.ac.uk](mailto:n.m.brooke@reading.ac.uk)).

## Programme Lifecycle Policy

4. If you are proposing a new programme or amending an existing programme, you should familiarise yourself with the [Programme Lifecycle Policy](#), which sets out the process and criteria by which proposals for new and amended programmes are considered. The University Programmes Board is responsible for approving new programmes and major amendments to existing programmes.
5. All undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes are required to have a Programme Specification which describes the programme in detail, including its aims and learning outcomes. The programme specification forms part of the University's contract with the student, applies to the cohort specified, and can be changed for that cohort only exceptionally.
6. Guidelines on programme specifications are available for [undergraduate programmes](#) and for [postgraduate taught programmes](#).
7. All modules within a programme (or any that may stand alone) are required to have their own Module Description. Guidelines on developing these can also be found [here](#).
8. The database of current and historic programme specifications are available [here](#) and of current and historic module descriptions [here](#).

## Fundamental requirements for programmes

### Curriculum Framework

9. All undergraduate and taught programmes must meet the expectations of the [Curriculum Framework](#). The Curriculum Framework outlines a set of Graduate Attributes and academic principles which characterise the University's undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes. The Framework is designed to facilitate the creative and collaborative process of curriculum design and enhancement.
10. A [suite of online toolkits](#) supports Schools in designing programmes in line with the Curriculum Framework.

### Subject benchmark statements

11. In designing programmes, Schools must pay due regard to the relevant [QAA Subject Benchmark Statement\(s\)](#), where they exist for the relevant subject area and level.
12. Subject benchmark statements set out the skills, knowledge and understanding which students studying programmes in those subjects should attain. The majority of Subject Benchmark Statements relate only to undergraduate programmes (Level 6), but some include reference to Level 7 programmes. There is a separate Subject Benchmark Statement for Business for Level 7 programmes.
13. It should be noted that, in the case of some programmes (particularly combined programmes), more than one Subject Benchmark Statement may be of relevance.

### University credit and qualification framework (UCQF)

14. All undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes (including credit-bearing CPD) must be designed in accordance with the [University credit and qualifications framework \(UCQF\)](#). This is the University's implementation of the QAA's [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\) of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) (compliance with which is required by the Office for Students as a condition of the University's registration as a higher education provider) and associated [credit guidance](#).
15. All taught degree programmes comprise a set of modules, which are credit-weighted (one credit represents 10 hours of notional student effort in relation to teaching, self-study and assessment). Each module within a programme must be located at a Level appropriate to its intended learning outcomes and should correspond to the relevant Level for the year of the programme, subject to the exception specified in paragraph 24.
16. All programmes must meet the overall minimum credits and the minimum credits at the level of award for each qualification as set out in the UCQF.
17. The minimum registration, normal completion and maximum registration periods specified in the UCQF apply across all programmes. UPB is responsible for approving any variations to the maximum and minimum registration periods, which will be permitted exceptionally and only where there is a compelling ground.
18. See paragraphs 20-45 below for a summary of the credit, level and registration requirements for the most common programmes in the University's portfolio.

## Requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

19. In designing programmes for which they seek professional accreditation, Schools must take account of the requirements of relevant professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).

## Parts, levels, duration and credits

### Bachelor's programmes

#### Full-time Bachelor's programmes

20. A full-time Bachelor's programme normally comprises three years of study or, where a programme includes a year-long placement or year abroad, four years. There are also a few other BA programmes (e.g. BA in Art and Art joint programmes) which are four years in duration; a compelling rationale is required for such non-placement/year abroad four-year programmes.
21. Bachelor's programmes are structured into three Parts (Parts 1, 2 and 3). The placement year/year abroad is normally placed between Part 2 and Part 3.
22. Each 'Part' normally represents an academic year of study and comprises 120 credits, corresponding to 1200 hours of study (on the basis that one credit = 10 notional hours of study).
23. Each Part relates to a Level of the UCQF: Part 1 corresponds to Level 4; Part 2 to Level 5; and Part 3 to Level 6. The placement year/year abroad is normally placed at Level 5.
24. In each Part modules amounting to at least 100 credits must be at the level of the Part. This supports students' progression through their programme and ensures that the final award (and any exit awards) fulfil the University's and national requirements. At Parts 1-3, 20 credits may be taken one level above or one level below the level of the Part, except that the restriction in respect of level does not apply to IWLP modules and introductory ancient language modules (CL1L and CL1G) (i.e. a Part 3 student may take 20 credits of IWLP modules, notwithstanding IWLP modules being at Level 4).
25. For guidance on Foundation Year within a Bachelor's/Integrated Master's programme, please see Appendix 1.

#### Part-time Bachelor's programmes

26. Part-time Bachelor's programmes follow the same structure as full-time programmes. As with full-time programmes, the following minimum number of credits are required at the levels indicated:
  - Level 4 100 credits minimum
  - Level 5 100 credits minimum
  - Level 6 100 credits minimum
27. Progression rules, as specified in programme specifications, apply. Students who do not qualify to proceed from Part 1 at the first attempt may resit failed modules at the next resit opportunity.

28. For Parts 2 and 3, students should take the remainder of the modules which will enable them to meet the requirements of the designated award. Students must complete at least 100 credits at Level 5 before they can proceed to study any Level 6 modules.

### Combined programmes (Joint Honours and Major/Minor)

29. Combined Honours programmes consist of two or more subjects with some level of interdisciplinarity.
30. As with single Honours programmes, combined Honours programmes should offer a coherent and consistent student experience. Schools contributing to a combined Honours programme should work collaboratively to design the programme around an agreed set of Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs). See paragraphs 48-50 for guidance on PLOs for combined programmes.
31. For combined programmes, the programme team must work together to enhance the links between the disciplines to ensure students have opportunities to bring together the knowledge of one or more disciplines.
32. Nomenclature for undergraduate programmes comprising two or more subjects
- Joint: where the programme is made up of roughly two equal and distinct halves of separate single subjects. Such programmes would be styled x **and** y.
  - Major/minor: the two subjects are distributed 67:33 or 75:25 or between these two distributions. Such programmes would be styled x **with** y.
  - Multi-disciplinary: where there are distinct linkages e.g. PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics), or those degrees in two subjects where the subjects are largely or wholly integrated.
33. Students on Joint programmes who achieve the University Threshold Standard for progression at Part 1 are permitted to transfer to a single Honours degree if they (a) have achieved at least 40% in 40 or more credits (e.g. 2 x 20 credits) of modules owned by the School or Department which delivers the single Honours programme to which the student wishes to transfer and (b) have met any programme-specific progression rules on the single Honours programme. Schools should be mindful of this provision when designing Joint Honours programmes, and should ensure that passing in any 40 credits in each subject in Part 1 of the Joint Honours programme provides a sufficient basis for students to have a reasonable prospect of success in Part 2 of the Single Honours programme in each subject.

### Other awards at undergraduate level

34. For information on other awards at undergraduate level, please see Appendix 2.

### Integrated Master's programmes

35. Integrated Masters' awards (such as MChem, MMath and MPharm) are delivered through a programme that combines study at the level of a Bachelor (Honours) degree (levels 4-6) and study at Master's level (Level 7). The programme leads to a single Master's award (Level 7) (**not a Bachelor's and a Master's degree**).

36. Four-year Integrated Masters' degree programmes are normally four years in duration and comprise 480 credits (with 120 credits taken in each year). They follow the same structure as Bachelor's programmes for Parts 1-3. Part 4 must comprise, for all students, 120 credits at Level 7 in order to meet national regulatory requirements.
37. All Integrated Masters programmes must have an established 'exit route' at Part 3, either through the award of the equivalent Bachelor's degree (where the syllabuses are aligned), or through the award of a specific 'exit' degree. The Bachelor's degree award should be based on the student's marks for Parts 2 and 3 only.

## Postgraduate Taught Master's programmes

38. Master's programmes consist of a minimum of 180 credits, with a minimum of 150 credits at Level 7. Full-time programmes are normally 12 months in duration. Master's programmes which comprise more than 180 credits will be longer than 12 months in duration; a rationale for the credit-value and duration of the award will need to be provided to UPB.
39. Most Taught Master's programmes normally include a significant research component in the form of a dissertation or research project.
40. Where a dissertation/research project is not included in the programme, Schools must ensure that programme learning outcomes are consistent with the Level 7 qualification descriptor. The programme proposal should explain the academic rationale for not including a dissertation/research project.
41. Schools have flexibility with regard to the credit balance between the taught modules and the dissertation within a programme. The different weighting of the research component is recognised in different award titles:

Title	Criteria
MA/MSc	Combined credit weight of dissertation and research methods modules amounts to 90 credits or less.
MRes	Combined credit weight of dissertation and research methods modules amounts to more than 90 credits and does not meet the criteria for an MA/MSc by Research.
MA/MSc by Research	<p>Research dissertation with a weight of at least 120 credits; or</p> <p>Research dissertation with a weight of at least 100 credits and a further distinct individual research element (not including research methods)</p> <p>Examiners appointed for individual candidate on basis of expertise in specific topic.</p>
LLM by Thesis	180 credits: wholly assessed by research thesis, which is individually examined. Research methods are not credit-bearing.

[University Credit and Qualifications Framework](#), section 20.

42. Where relevant, guidelines issued by Research Councils and/or professional associations should be followed. Programmes seeking or expecting approval from Research Councils and/or professional associations should normally be entirely at Level 7 unless assured by such bodies that the inclusion of undergraduate modules is permitted.
43. Up to 20 credits in a particular programme may be set aside for modules in the Institution-wide Language Programme or the introductory ancient language modules (CL1G1 Ancient Greek 1 and CL1L1 Latin 1), if there is a good academic reason for doing so.
44. Programmes must comply with the minimal registration, normal completion and maximum registration times specified in the UCQF. Part-time taught postgraduate programmes which last for 24 months should be designated as '**part-time**', whilst those which last up to 63 months should be designated as '**flexible**'.

## Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas

45. Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas are awards at level 7 consisting of at least 60 credits (40 credits at Level 7) and 120 credits (90 at Level 7) respectively.
46. They may be standalone qualifications or exit points within a taught Masters programme. Students undertaking a Master's programme who successfully pass modules with the number of credits required for a Postgraduate Diploma or a Postgraduate Certificate may, if they so wish, leave the University with such a qualification, subject to any programme-specific requirements.
47. Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas, whether awarded on the basis of a stand-alone programme or as an exit award, are consistent with the Level 7 qualification descriptors in the UCQF. Further information on the awards is available in the Assessment Handbook, section 19.

## Other aspects of programme structure and delivery

### Programme Learning Outcomes

48. Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are an explicit description of what students should know, understand and be able to do as a result of studying on a particular programme. Guidance on developing PLOs can be found [here](#) (section 3.3).
49. Given that PLOs are necessarily high level statements of intent, it is recommended that:
  - Undergraduate single and joint/combined programmes have 10-12 PLOs
  - PGT programmes have 6-8 PLOs.
50. The PLOs for a combined programme will include some subject-specific PLOs and some which are shared between the two subjects.



## Inclusion by design

51. The design and delivery of the programme should anticipate how to enable students to participate fully in learning, in spite of any challenges and barriers the varied student body may face. This includes educational, cultural and social backgrounds and experiences, as well as specific learning difficulties, physical/sensory impairment or disability, long-term medical conditions including mental well-being, or temporary adjustments such as injury, surgery or bereavement.
52. Inclusion by design also extends to colleagues. How colleagues' diverse needs are supported to fully enable quality teaching and delivery is also central to the process.
53. In designing a programme, Schools should:
  - Take positive action to better understand, reduce and eliminate differential outcome gaps (the awarding gap) between students from differing socio economic or ethnic backgrounds or those with disabilities.
  - Decolonise the Curriculum. Schools should consider how to create spaces and resources that consider who or what is centred in the curriculum, recognise alternative histories and knowledge, and ensure a range of voices and perspectives are presented.
54. Assessment should be designed to be inclusive, adopting an anticipatory approach to ensure an inclusive learning experience for all, rather than requiring adjustments to be made for individuals later (though some may still need this, depending on their specific needs).

## Digital activities and resources

55. From 2024/25, the majority of a programme's contact time should continue to be offered face-to-face, but every programme will incorporate elements of relevant digital activities and resources. All programmes must include elements of relevant digital activities and resources. Schools are encouraged to consider providing around 30% of the 'scheduled teaching and learning activities' and/or 'self-scheduled teaching and learning activities' online. A programme should only be 100% face-to-face or 100% online where it has been approved as necessary (e.g., a distance learning programme; professional body requirements or agreements with international educational bodies on modes of learning).
56. The use of technology will be applied throughout the years of the programme and across modules, not bunched into a single year or only present in a small number of modules. The amount of online activity can vary between modules, dependent on what is being taught and the context.
57. Every programme will use a University template for their modules on Blackboard (or Canvas), guided by the [University Blackboard Threshold Standards](#).

## Employability skills

58. All programmes must contain the following elements of employability and work-related learning, embedded across the curriculum, available and accessible for all students, and clearly signposted in programme-related documentation:

- Exposure to job roles, career paths and areas of work related to the programme of study, in a way that stimulates curiosity about the world of work and the full range of future possibilities;
  - Opportunities to develop a broad range of employability skills, and to understand and articulate what these are and how they are supported within programmes;
  - Opportunities to engage with real-life work problems or work scenarios in contexts relevant to the programme.
59. Further information on employability skills and work-related learning can be found in the [Policy on employability, work-related learning and careers](#) and the [employability tool kits](#).

## Placement opportunities

60. All undergraduate programmes must have a placement opportunity available to students, being either a work or academic placement, which might take one of three forms:

Micro: embedded within a module

Mini: constituting an entire module (mini placements will normally have a mark (i.e. not pass/fail))

Maxi: comprising a year (there are two types of Maxi placement – those which contribute to classification (i.e. involve the award of a mark) and those which do not contribute (i.e. placement is Pass/Fail only).

61. Those programmes which offer a ‘maxi’ placement should also offer either a ‘micro’ or a ‘mini’ placement since a significant number of students may not be able to commit to a full year placement.
62. Placement preparation is a key part of the placement, and should be incorporated into the credit-bearing learning experience of the placement modules itself, where reasonably feasible.
63. In those cases where it is not reasonably feasible to placement preparation into the credit-bearing modules that form the programme, they should be classified as ‘preparatory learning’.

## Opportunities for Study Abroad

64. Undergraduate programmes should normally be flexible enough to allow sufficient opportunities for those students wishing to study abroad. The eligibility criteria for outgoing student mobility are available [here](#). It is recognised that there may be some programmes, particularly professional programmes with PSRB accreditation, where such opportunities are not feasible.

## Semesters

65. From 2024/25, the academic year comprises two 15-week semesters, including a three-week assessment period at the end of each semester
66. For Undergraduates, a mid-semester week will be retained, so that in each semester there is 11 weeks of teaching plus one mid-semester enhancement week.
67. There will be a 12-week period of teaching (11 weeks plus a mid-semester week) in Semester 1 that will start immediately after Welcome Week and finish before Christmas.

## Modules

### Module credit weight

68. Modules must be 20 credits or multiples of 20 credits.
69. Modules should not normally exceed 60 credits, except in the case of dissertation/project modules, studio work (for example, in subjects including Arts, Design, Theatre and Film), placement/fieldwork and study abroad modules. Proposals for exceptions beyond these parameters should be discussed with the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean in the first instance.
70. Wherever reasonably feasible, academic skills development should be integrated into credit-bearing modules rather than sit as a separable element. The inclusion of preparatory learning modules which are not credit-bearing within the curriculum is discouraged.

### Modules and semesters

71. Programmes should normally be designed with credit distributed equally over the two semesters, or, in the case of PGT programmes, evenly over the two semesters and the post-semester summer period. For undergraduate programmes, students should normally take 60 credits in each semester, although some variation is permitted, as indicated in the section on Modules and Semesters below.
72. Modules should normally be taught and assessed over one semester.
73. However, a module can be delivered over more than a single semester and/or outside a semester in certain circumstances. (Modules delivered over more than a single semester are referred to as 'Long' modules, with 'Long-Thin' used to describe a 20-credit module delivered across 2 semesters). The relevant circumstances are:
  - Seasonal issues (e.g. growing of crops, rearing of livestock) which require a period longer than one semester.
  - Pedagogic reasons that students cannot learn the material in one semester, e.g. language learning.
  - Modules of 40 credits or more.
  - Dissertation, capstone or project modules that require activities to be completed over a period longer than one semester, e.g. data collection, experimental activities, synthesis of knowledge, reflection, writing up.
  - External involvement requiring the module to be run at specific times (e.g. schools placement).
  - Placements that take place outside the Academic Year, including vacation times.
  - Accreditation body requirements.
  - A co-requisite 'long-thin' (20 credit) module exists for one of the reasons above, and an additional one is needed to maintain credit balance for students over semesters.
  - A 20 credit long-thin module is required to ensure a balanced workload for joint students.
  - Modules which are part of a 12-month PGT programme may run over the summer following Semester 2.

74. It is recognised that placement modules (micro, mini, maxi) are likely to be taught and assessed over more than one semester, including the summer vacation of the preceding year, depending on the nature of the module and placement activity.
75. Schools which have to create a 20 credit long-thin module should consider creating a co-requisite long-thin module to retain workload balance between semesters, unless this would cause a problematic imbalance for joint students.
76. Programme amendments which introduce long-thin modules to a programme need to be referred to UPB for approval. UPB will give particular consideration to the inclusion of long-thin modules in new programme proposals.
77. A slight imbalance in module weighting across semesters (e.g. for undergraduate programmes - 50:70, 70:50) may be permitted where this arises from compulsory or optional modules having to be long and thin.
78. Where 20 credit long-thin modules are created, assessment should be evenly balanced across the two semesters (and Module Design should avoid overuse of Exams during the second semester assessment period).

### ***Compulsory first semester***

79. The first semester of programmes (i.e. the Semester 1 of Foundation Year, UG Part 1 and most PGT) should comprise compulsory modules, and programmes should then include increasing optionality as students move through the programme e.g. in Semester 2 and Parts 2, 3 and 4 of undergraduate programmes and in Semester 2 of postgraduate taught programmes.
80. A variation on the requirement for the first semester of a programme to comprise a set of compulsory modules is permitted for:
  - a. The International Foundation Programme and International Foundation Year
  - b. Programmes which require streaming, in the form of an 'either/or' choice in Part 1, based on prior attainment.
  - c. Programmes which offer IWLP as an option. The IWLP module will be in the second semester optional basket(s) but will commence teaching in the first semester as a 'long-thin' module. An imbalance of 70:50 credits (or equivalent 10 credit worth of difference for Masters' programmes) per semester will be acceptable to accommodate IWLP modules.
  - d. PGT programmes may include optional modules in Semester 1, subject to UPB's approval. The Board of Studies and Student Experience (BoSSE) should explain why a compulsory first semester is not feasible for the programme.

PGT programmes that start in the University's semester 2 are exempt from the expectation of a compulsory first semester; however, students should be provided with timetabling information by their School before they start.

## **Optional modules and baskets**

81. In order to ensure that the choice of optional modules offered to students is practically deliverable, optional modules should be grouped into 'baskets' from which students may normally select one module.
82. There are three approved 'baskets' models which should meet the needs of most programmes (see [guidance](#), pp. 23-30, and some [examples](#)). The choice of approved model rests with Schools and a different model can be used for each Part of study within a programme, if required. TLDs can approve exceptions as appropriate.
83. University-Wide modules (UWMs) and IWLP modules will be included in dedicated baskets distinct from the baskets of programme-specific optional modules to allow a range of realistic choices for students.

## **IWLP modules**

84. Students in Part 1, 2 and 3 and PGT Masters students may normally take 20 credits of IWLP modules or of the introductory ancient language modules (CL1G1 Ancient Greek 1 and CL1L1 Latin 1). There may, however, be some programmes where this opportunity is not feasible. This provision includes Part 3 and PGT Master's programmes, notwithstanding these modules being at Level 4. It should be noted that students on Part 4 of an Integrated Master's programme are not permitted to take any of these modules since students are required to take 120 credits at Level 7 in Part 4 in accordance with national regulatory requirements.
85. Students will be able to change from IWLP to a semester 2 option up to the end of Semester 1, week 7. This provision applies also to an introductory ancient language module (CL1G1 Ancient Greek 1 or CL1L1 Latin 1) except where the module is compulsory.

## **Field trips**

86. To facilitate the running of field classes, it may be necessary to schedule these for the mid-semester week or in designated vacation periods. Reasoning for this may include, but not be limited to, seasonal issues (weather, plant/crop availability, seasonal activities etc.) or to avoid clashing with other timetabled teaching activities.
87. Where such field trips and visits are scheduled for the mid-semester week or in designated vacation periods, this should be clearly communicated to students along with any associated costs or additional payments required in advance of selecting optional modules. Such information should be included in Programme Specifications, Module Description Forms (MDFs), and marketing materials e.g., School webpages, and is mandatory for compulsory field class elements. Clear schedules of any associated assessments for these field classes must also be given to the students, including any expectation that work is needed to be undertaken during the mid-semester week or vacation periods towards the assessment.
88. Where fieldwork takes place on optional modules, an appropriate portfolio of optional modules should be available to offer students choice if they do not wish to choose a module that has field work in a vacation period.

## Capping module enrolments

89. When including optional modules in a programme, Schools should be mindful that optional modules will not normally be capped. For the policy in relation to module capping, please see Appendix 3.

## Preparatory learning

90. Learning activities which involve a specified and relatively small number of hours of engagement and no summative assessment may be classified as 'preparatory learning', but only where it is not reasonably feasible to incorporate the activity into credit-bearing modules. Such instances might include:
- placement preparation careers/professional skills
  - transition into and through HE
  - Academic English modules.
91. Given that careers/professional skills and study skills are central to the curriculum and students' learning, staff are encouraged to integrate such learning into credit-bearing modules wherever reasonably feasible.
92. The management of 'Preparatory Learning' sessions should be discussed with Timetabling and Support Centres to ensure these sessions have timetable slots and students have access to appropriate resources (e.g. Blackboard).

## Assessment, progression and classification

93. University policies and regulations in relation to assessment, including progression and classification, are set out in the Assessment Handbook.
94. In designing assessments, Schools should take account of the following principles:
- All assessments need to make a valid contribution to the Programme learning outcomes.
  - Module learning outcomes should be informed by Programme learning outcomes, and the method/s of assessment for the module as a whole should ensure students have demonstrated they have fulfilled the module's learning outcomes.
  - Assessments should be authentic, enabling students to use and apply their knowledge, skills and understanding in contexts which have meaning beyond the classroom.
  - Assessment should be inclusive, taking an anticipatory approach when planning assessments in order to ensure an inclusive learning experience for all, rather than needing adjustments to be made for individuals later (though some may still need this, depending on their specific needs). Inclusive assessments mean all students have sufficient time, support and ability to complete them without the need for additional resource.
  - Assessments need to be scaffolded with opportunities for assessment for learning and supported with clear assessment briefs, criteria and feedback (as required in the current University Assessment and Feedback Handbook under section 6.9.1).
  - There should be a programme view of assessment to ensure an appropriate balance of continuity and variety of assessment tasks.

- Programme teams should work together on assessment to ensure a consistent approach is taken e.g., a standard template for assessment briefs, a consistent approach to assessment support, consistent assessment rubrics which ask for the same things at the same level of study for each type of assessment.
95. It is recommended that:
- 25% of the module's total notional learning hours are devoted to assessment, in line with current practice across the HE sector.
  - Schools produce an assessment strategy to ensure that:
    - Programme Learning Outcomes, Module Learning Outcomes, and associated assessments are mapped,
    - Assessment is planned to shape learning and provide regular, timely opportunities for feedback and reflection,
    - Assessment and feedback are proportionate and distributed effectively to support learning and wellbeing for staff and students.
96. It is expected that:
- A 20 credit module will ideally have two pieces of summative assessment and not more than three pieces of summative assessment. Modules which are 40 credits or more will have not more than four summative assessments.
  - Modules are assessed in the semester in which they are taught.
  - All examinations will take place during the scheduled assessment period for that module, all other assessment will be evenly distributed throughout the module duration.
  - Modules which span semesters have some summative assessment in Semester 1.
  - Students' assessment workload (both summative and formative) is spread across the semester to encourage time and effort towards the achievement of module learning outcomes.
  - The timing of formative and summative assessment is co-ordinated with other module convenors delivering modules in the same semester for the programme.
  - Schools should have a maximum number of assessment submission points in any one week so as not to overload students. Schools should map this by part for programmes and also map out staff workloads during assessment periods.
97. Policy and regulations in relation to Progression are specified in the Assessment Handbook, section 15.
98. Policy and regulations in relation to awarding and classification are specified in the Assessment Handbook, sections 16-25.

## Awards not listed in the UCQF

99. All programmes resulting in a University award should normally be designed to fulfil the requirements of the qualifications listed in the UCQF.
100. Credit-bearing individual or combinations of modules which are offered to students but do not meet the requirements of any of the qualifications listed in the UCQF can result in an award of University credit represented by a 'Certificate of credit'. In these circumstances, a programme specification is not required but module descriptions should be in place and appropriately approved.

101. Should it be intended that individual modules be able to act as 'building blocks' towards a qualification listed in the UCQF then this needs to be captured in the programme specification of an existing programme (if appropriate), or a new, specifically designed, programme specification will need to be created and approved in accordance with normal procedures.
  
102. In all cases where a programme is created leading to an award which is not listed in the UCQF, the following should be adhered to:
  - a) No award can be made for study of less than 30 credits;
  - b) Caution should be taken in the use of qualification titles that have commonly accepted meanings in the higher education sector such as 'certificate' or 'diploma'. When these are used they should always be qualified, normally with the word 'Professional' i.e. 'Professional Certificate' although other qualifiers are acceptable if required or preferred by an external professional body;
  - c) Where there are two related awards 'Certificate' should be used in relation to the lesser of the two awards and 'Diploma' in relation to the higher;
  - d) A separate programme specification should be in place.



## Appendix 1: Foundation Level

103. The University runs an International Foundation Programme (IFP) and a number of Programmes 'with Foundation Year' or 'with International Foundation Year'. The IFP and Foundation Year (also referred to as Year/Part 0) are placed at a Foundation Level within the UCQF. Further details relating to the International Foundation Programme are provided in the relevant programme specifications, which are available at: [www.reading.ac.uk/progspecs/](http://www.reading.ac.uk/progspecs/). Further details about Programmes 'with Foundation Year' are provided in the [Protocols for Programmes Comprising a Foundation Year](#), which include the shared modular structure for the University's Foundation Year provision, and in the relevant programme specifications.
104. The requirements for threshold performance at Part 0 are specified in Section 15: Progression of the Assessment Handbook. In addition, in order to progress from Part 0 to Part 1 of an Ordinary Degree, Bachelor's or Integrated Master's programme, a student must fulfil any programme-specific requirements which are stipulated in the relevant programme specification

## Appendix 2: Other awards at undergraduate level

### Certificates and Diplomas of Higher Education

105. At the University, the Certificate of Higher Education and Diploma of Higher Education are currently only 'exit' awards for students who have met the University Threshold Standard at Part 1 or Part 2 respectively and who, for whatever reason, are leaving the University. At present, the University does not offer programmes which have the CertHE or DipHE as target awards, but it does not preclude the possibility of such programmes.
106. The CertHE comprises 120 credits at Level 4, and the DipHE comprises 240 credits including at least 100 at Level 5. More information on the awards is available in the Assessment Handbook, sections 20 and 21.

### Foundation degrees

107. Foundation Degrees are Level 5 award, comprise 240 credits (including at least 100 at Level 5), and are 2 years in duration. The principles used in relation to the design of the University's undergraduate degrees should be followed in relation to the design of a Foundation Degree, as far as they are applicable.
108. Foundation Degrees are designed to integrate academic and work-based learning, and to equip learners with knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to their employment. They should also prepare learners for further study and a progression route onto an appropriate Honours Degree should be defined.
109. Foundation Degrees will normally be delivered through a partnership with one or more Further Education Colleges.
110. A Foundation Degree should be developed by the University in partnership with the Further Education College(s) which will be delivering it, employers, professional bodies.

### Graduate Certificates and Diplomas

111. Graduate Certificates (60 credits at Level 6) and Graduate Diplomas (120 credits with 100 at Level 6) are normally professional programmes, which can be taken by both graduates and non-graduates. The same programme design principles apply to Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas as to other programmes. Please refer to Assessment Handbook for information on classification requirements.

## Appendix 3: Module capping

112. Optional modules should not normally be capped, given that the University wishes to ensure that, wherever reasonably feasible, all students are able to follow their choice of permitted pathway through their programme.
113. Where module capping is unavoidable (e.g. due to space constraints) a fair and transparent process will be implemented.
114. Module capping will be acceptable in following circumstances:
  - Modules containing field trips and placements (i.e. due to capacity, logistical or safety issues) (NB where field trips are only available to a limited cohort, this should be made clear in admissions/marketing information)
  - Modules reliant on specialist rooms/facilities (e.g., laboratories or studios) (NB Schools should, in the first instance, look at other options rather than capping; for example, sharing equipment with other Departments/Schools)
  - Modules affected by unplanned staffing issues (unexpected, short-term insufficient resource to deliver larger or duplicate sessions)
115. Schools should also communicate details of any module capping to students in advance of module selection.
116. To ensure transparency, the cohort size for capping must be adhered to. However, once selection closes and the random ballot has taken place, SDTLs should have the opportunity to increase a cap (e.g., if sufficient students had selected a module to make double teaching a viable option).
117. If a School wishes to apply a cap to numbers of students taking a module from other schools, this should be agreed in advance so that it can be clearly communicated to students as part of the module selection process (e.g., an overall module cap of 200 students, with a cap of 50 students for the 'external' Schools).
118. Approval of capping will be managed by the SDTL, with the exception of requests to 'roll over' capping beyond one academic year for reasons of staffing issues, which will be considered by the relevant