Aston University

Qualifications Frameworks

Applicable to students in all Stages/years of programmes

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1 Qualifications **within** the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

Qualification	Qualification Level (FHEQ)	Minimum credits for the award	Minimum Credits at qualification level	Other requirements	FQ-EHEA Cycles	ECTS Credits
CertHE	4	120	90	None		60 ECTS credits
DipHE	5	240	90	Maximum 150 Level 4 credits	Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications	approximately 120 ECTS credits
Foundation Degree (e.g. FdEng)	5	240	90	Minimum 100 Level 4 credits		
Ordinary Degree	6	300	60	None	First cycle **(end of cycle)** qualifications	180-240 ECTS credits
Ordinary Degree with Sandwich/Language Placement	6	420 (including 120 at Level P)	60	None		
Pass Degree (Honours Degree)	6	320	Not specified	Overall average of at least 35% in modules contributing to degree classification		
Pass Degree (Honours Degree) with Sandwich/Language Placement	6	440 (including 120 at Level P)	Not specified	Overall average of at least 35% in modules contributing to degree classification		
Honours Degree	6	360	90	Maximum 150 Level 4 credits		
Honours Degree with Sandwich/Language Placement	6	480 (including 120 at Level P)	90	Maximum 160 Level 4 credits		
Graduate Diploma	6	120	80	None		

Qualification	Qualification Level (FHEQ)	Minimum credits for the award	Minimum Credits at award level	Other requirements	FQ-EHEA Cycles	ECTS Credits
PgC	7	60	40	None		
PgD	7	120	90	None		

Integrated Master's Degree (e.g. MEng, MPharm)	7	480	120	Maximum 140 Level 4 credits. 220 credits at Level 6 or 7	Second cycle **(end of cycle)** qualifications	The minimum requirement is 60 ECTS credits; however a range of 90-120 ECTS credits is more typical at second cycle level
Integrated Master's Degree with Sandwich/Language Placement	7	600 (including 120 at Level P)	120	Maximum 140 Level 4 credits. 220 credits at Level 6 or 7		
Accelerated Integrated Master's Degree with Sandwich/Language Placement	7	540 (including 90 at Level P)	120	Minimum 90 credits at Level 6		
Taught Master's Degree MSc/MA/MBA/MRes	7	180	150	None		
Extended Taught Master's Degree MSc/MA/MBA/MRes	7	240	200	None		
Research Master's Degree MSc or MA (by Research)	7	Not credit-rated	N/A	None		
MPhil	7	Not credit-rated	N/A	None		

PhD	8	Not credit-rated	N/A	None	Third cycle **(end of cycle)** qualifications	Not typically credit-rated
Professional Doctorate (DProf)	8	Not credit-rated except for contributory modules at Master's level and below	Taught element will be no more than one third of programme	None		

2 Qualifications **outside** the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)**

Qualification	**Qualification level**	**Credits required for the award**
Foundation Diploma	Level 0	120
Aston University Certificate	Level 4, 5, 6 or 7 (Level must be specified on certificate)	10 – 50 credits (credit volume must be specified on certificate)
Aston University Diploma	Level 4, 5, 6 or 7 (Level must be specified on certificate)	60 – 100 credits (credit volume must be specified on certificate)
Aston University Record of Attendance	Any Level	Any programme of less than 10 credits. ***

****An award within the FHEQ should be offered in preference to one which is outside the FHEQ if possible.**

***** Any short courses which are credit-rated should be approved by the providing School and recorded on the student record system.**

3 KEY DEFINITIONS

3.1 Credit

A credit is a measure of the amount of work attached to each unit of teaching, learning and assessment; 10 learning hours = 1 credit. Students are required to obtain credit by compliance with the University General Regulations and the programme specification for their programme. Degrees by individual research are not credit-rated at Aston University as the research process and the majority of its meaningful outcomes are unique to the individual being assessed and not the result of a unit of teaching, learning and assessment shared by a group.

3.2 Core Module

A core module is a module that students must complete in order to be considered for a particular degree. The core modules for each programme are given in the relevant programme specification.

3.3 Dissertation Module (Master's only)

MA/MSc/MBA dissertations should not be larger than 80 credits or smaller than 60 credits. If a dissertation is larger than 60 credits adequate provision should be made for students to exit with a Postgraduate Diploma. Dissertations should consist of one module, subject to the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

3.4 Foundation Degree

The Foundation Degree is an unclassified award conferred on candidates successfully completing periods of Level 4 and Level 5 study. Candidates are expected to achieve 240 credits with a minimum of 90 at Level 5 to be eligible for the award of Foundation Degree:

Candidates who successfully complete 120 credits with a minimum of 90 credits at Level 4, but do not complete the Foundation Degree, will be eligible for the award of a Certificate of Higher Education. A Foundation Degree may include Level 0 credits.

3.5 Levels

Each module is ascribed one of the following Levels only. Levels are assigned to a module by considering the award to which the programme is leading and the prior knowledge or expertise required to undertake the module.

Level 0 the knowledge and understanding required to commence the preliminary Stage of an Honours Degree, not to be used in determining the final degree classification.

Level 4 the standard of modules designed principally for the first Stage of an Honours Degree, normally not to be used in determining the final degree classification.

Level 5 the standard of modules designed principally for the second Stage of an Honours Degree.

Level 6 the standard of modules designed principally for the final Stage(s) of a Bachelors Honours Degree.

Level 7 the standard of modules appropriate to a postgraduate taught programme. Programmes at this Level normally require the prerequisite experience and skills of an Honours graduate or equivalent.

Level 8 the standard of modules appropriate to a doctoral programme. Programmes at this Level normally require the prerequisite experience and skills of a Master's graduate or equivalent.

Level P assessed sandwich placement, linguistic experience, academic study abroad or professional practice.

3.6 **Module**

A module is an agreed unit of teaching, learning and assessment comprising 100 hours of notional student effort for 10 credits. Modules may be offered for exact multiples of 5 credits, from 10 upwards. Where a module has more than one assessed element, the required mark will be the weighted average of the marks for each element as defined in the module description. Research Programmes may contain credit-rated modules. Diploma Supplements will record credits gained through modules.

3.7 **Naming of Awards**

The following **final** awards do not have names: MSc or MA (by Research), MPhil, PhD.

a Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) and Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE) awards which are **intermediate awards** do not have names. CertHe and DipHE awards which are **final** awards in their own right have the names agreed during programme approval.

b All Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma awards have the names agreed during the programme approval process. In the case of intermediate awards this will be the same as the final award unless a different name is approved as part of programme approval. The naming of postgraduate intermediate awards reflects the high level of subject specific expertise that the programmes develop in their graduates

3.8 **Optional Module**

An optional module is a module that a student chooses to complete as part of their programme from a number of options offered. Optional modules may be offered by the same School and subject area as the student's programme of study, or by another School/Subject Area. The available option modules will be listed in the programme specification.

3.9 **Ordinary Degree**

An Ordinary Degree, into which a student may transfer during their period of study in accordance with the programme specification for the programme, has specific programme requirements, but requires a lower credit total than a degree with Honours; 300 credits for a full-time degree and 420 for a sandwich/language degree. At least 60 credits must be at Level 6. A student may not be admitted directly to an Ordinary Degree programme.

3.10 **Pass Degree**

A student who has followed an approved programme leading to a degree with Honours, but who fails to reach an Honours standard, may, at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, be awarded a Pass Degree; provided that they have achieved an overall average of at least 35% in those modules contributing to the classification of the degree award and a minimum of 320 credits for a full-time degree, or 440 credits for a sandwich/language degree overall. There shall be no Pass Degree for programmes leading to an Integrated Master's Degree.

3.11 **Pass Mark**

In order to gain credit for a module a student must normally have gained a pass mark in that module of at least 40% for modules at Levels 4, 5 or 6, and 50% for modules at Level 7.

Master's (Level 7) modules should have a 50% pass mark when part of an integrated Master's programme or when available as an option on an undergraduate programme.

3.12 **Programme Specification**

All approved taught programmes shall have a programme specification in the format approved by the University. There is no programme specification for programmes of individual research. General Regulations specify the information that should be provided to students by Schools.

3.13 **Research Degrees**

Research Degrees are MSc by Research, MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorate. A Research Degree is awarded on the basis of a thesis (or a portfolio for some Professional Doctorates) which assesses outcomes unique to each student and their topic. A student may complete modules as part of a research degree but these are not the basis on which the award is determined. Research degrees may therefore include credit-rated modules but are not themselves given an overall credit-rating.