UCL Academic Manual
2024-25

Chapter 7, Part A: Qualifications and Credit Framework

Chapter 7, Part A is UCL's regulatory framework defining the underpinning structures of all Programmes leading to taught and research Qualifications at UCL.

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4.1 Undergraduate Qualifications

QAA: Quality Assurance Agency
QCF: Qualifications and Credit Framework
QTS: Qualified Teacher Status
RPL: The Recognition of Prior Learning

See also Section 2: The Qualifications of UCL for Qualification abbreviations.

2 The Qualifications of UCL

The following Qualifications are accredited by University College London, granted under the ordinances and statutes of the University of London[1] and governed by this Qualifications and Credit Framework:

Professional Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher and Professional Education (PCTL)

Level 6 Graduate Diplomas

Graduate Diploma (Grad Dip)

Pre-Masters Programmes

International Pre-Masters

2.4 Taught Postgraduate Qualifications

Level 7 Postgraduate Certificates

Postgraduate Certificate (PG Cert)
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

Level 7 Postgraduate Diplomas

Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip)
Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)

Level 7 Taught Masters Degrees

Master of Architecture (MArch)
Master of Arts (MA)
International Master of Arts (MA (International))
Master of Arts and Sciences (MASc) (see Annex 7.10.2: MASc Qualification Descriptor)
Master of Business Administration (MBA) (see Annex 7.10.3: MBA Qualification Descriptor)
Master of Clinical Dentistry (MClinDent)
Master of Education (MEd)
Master of Fine Art (MFA)
Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA)
Master of Laws (LLM)
Master of Planning (MPlan)
Master of Public Administration (MPA)
Master of Public Health (MPH)
Master of Science (MSc)
Master of Surgery (MS)
Master of Teaching (MTeach)

2.5 Postgraduate Research Qualifications

Level 7 Research Masters Degrees

Master of Research (MRes)
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
Master in Philosophical Studies (MPhilStud)

Level 8 Doctorates

Doctor of Philosophy (MPhil/ PhD)
Doctor in Engineering (EngD)
Doctor of Medicine (Research) (MD(Res))
Doctor of Public administration (DPA)

Level 8 Professional Doctorates

Doctor in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)
Doctor in Dentistry (DDent)

Doctor in Education (EdD)
Doctor in Educational Psychology (DEdPsy)
Doctor in Educational and Child Psychology (DECPsy)
Doctor in Orthopaedics (Doc.Orth)
Doctor in Psychotherapy (DPsychotherapy)
Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)

Level 8 Integrated Doctorates

Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery/ Doctor of Philosophy (MB PhD)
Master of Research/ Doctor in Engineering (MRes/ EngD)
Master of Research/ Doctor of Philosophy (MRes/ MPhil/PhD)

3 Framework Components

1. A number of components define the basic structures of all UCL Qualifications:

3.1 Qualification

1. A Qualification is a Doctorate, Degree, Diploma or Certificate accredited and conferred by UCL following the successful completion of an approved Programme of Study.
2. A Qualification must meet the minimum academic standards set out in Section 6: Threshold Qualification Requirements.
3. Qualifications may fall into one or more of the following categories:

   Exit Qualifications: The full set of possible Qualifications associated with a Programme of Study, including the Final Qualification and any Interim and Alternative Qualifications.
   Final Qualification: The intended Qualification from a Programme of Study which a student will be awarded if they meet all the Programme requirements e.g. BEng (Hons) Engineering.
   Interim Qualification: A lesser Qualification made as a result of a student either leaving a Programme of Study early or failing to meet the requirements for the Final Qualification e.g. Cert HE Engineering. See Section 3.14: Interim Qualifications for further details.
   Alternative Qualification: An Exit Qualification at the same Level as the Final Qualification, awarded where a student is unable to meet the specific requirements for the Programme of Study on which they initially enrolled but nonetheless meets UCL's minimum threshold standards for the award of a Qualification. Often used where a student does not meet the professional accreditation requirements associated with a Final Qualification. Includes a named, approved, alternative Field of Study e.g. BSc (Hons) Engineering Studies.

4. The form of the Qualification Title must signify both the Level of the Qualification and the broad discipline in which the study has been undertaken (e.g. Bachelor of Science). The Qualification Title is combined with the Field of Study to create the Degree Title e.g. Bachelor of Science in Engineering. A Programme of Study may have one or more Degree Titles associated with it, reflecting different Routes and Pathways.
5. Proposals for new Qualifications must be developed in line with the Qualifications and Credit Framework, approved by Academic Committee and incorporated into Section 2: The

Student Record System and does not appear on the student’s degree certificate or

3. Students failing to meet the requirements of a particular Programme of Study may be eligible for an Alternative Qualification with a different Field of Study.

3.6 Academic Level

1. Each Qualification must have an associated Academic Level which aligns with the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA).
2. Programmes and Modules must be developed with reference to the Level Descriptors in Section 5 of this Framework. These describe the depth and complexity of each Academic Level and outline the academic skills, amount of prior knowledge and amount of learner autonomy required to pass a Programme or Module at each Academic Level.
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3.7 Academic and Calendar Years

1. A Programme may run over an academic year or a calendar year, defined as follows:

Academic Year

1200 learning hours
120 credits
3 terms
30 weeks
40 hours per week
September start date

Calendar Year

1800 learning hours
180 credits
n/a (terms)
45 weeks
40 hours per week
September, January or April start date

2. Undergraduate, Graduate and short Taught Postgraduate Programmes should follow an Academic Year.
3. Taught Masters, Research Masters and Doctoral Programmes should follow a Calendar Year, although some Pro t d m} HA 5¢ dP k

Full-time: Students study for 40 hours per week. Additionally students retaking a year will be deemed Full-time, when retaking more than half of the activity of the year.
Part-time: Students study at a structured rate per week, normally half the rate of Full-time study. Additionally students retaking a year will be deemed Part-time when retaking half or less of the activity of the year.
Flexible: The number of Modules studied in a given year is determined by the student, in agreement with their Department. There will be a specified maximum time in which the student must complete.

The Location of Study

Campus-based: Students are required to attend UCL for enrolment and some scheduled activities, such as lectures, seminars, tutorials etc.
Distance Learning: Students are not required to attend UCL for enrolment nor scheduled activities. Students have access to UCL libraries, facilities and learning support. All teaching, learning and assessment activities take place away from UCL.
Mixed-mode: Students attend as Distance Learning and then change to Campus-based (or vice versa). This change may occur multiple times within the student's Programme of Study, and will either be at set points within the Programme or will be determined by student Module selection.
Non-resident (Postgraduate Research Students only): Students study primarily away from campus, and are required to attend UCL on a limited number of occasions in order to meet their supervisor and attend the meetings for upgrade and assessment.

Note: Location of Study in this context relates to the UCL Campus(es) and not to the country in which a student is based.
Note: Distance Learning is the term used by UK government agencies. Within UCL this may be referred to in other ways, such as "non-campus".

Fixed Period Study Arrangements

Integrated Placement or Study Abroad: Students spend a defined period of time studying in another country or undertaking a professional or industrial placement within the minimum number of credits needed to complete the UCL Qualification, as defined in Section 6: Threshold Qualification Requirements. See Sections 3.15 and 3.16 for further details.
Extra-mural/ Additional Placement or Study Abroad: Students spend an additional

8. Chapter 4, Part A: Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes includes further details about the specific requirements for a student to pass a Module, and how Module marks are combined to determine Progression, Award and Classification.

3.11 Components

1. A Module may include one or more Components. Components may be equally weighted, or some may carry a higher weighting than others (e.g. Essay 60%, Presentation 40%).
2. Components may be Formative or Summative; the marks from Summative Components are used to determine the overall Module mark.
3. A Component may be designated as Non-condonable i.e. the Component must be passed in order to pass the Module, for example as a requirement of Professional Accreditation. Non-condonable Components are only possible on Non-condonable Modules.
4. Chapter 4, Part A: Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes includes further details about the assessment of Formative and Summative Components.

3.12 Taught Elements on Research Programmes

1. Non-modular Research Masters (e.g. MPhil) may include training in research methods or transferable skills which require attendance at lectures and seminars.
2.

The Department/ Division may allow a student to transfer to a cognate Programme without a Placement Requirement. For example, if a student on “MSci Geophysical Sciences with a Year in Industry” fails a Placement in Year 3, they may be transferred from to “MSci Geophysical Sciences” to complete their degree.
The Department/ Division may incorporate an Exit Qualification with an Alternate Field of Study into the Programme, with an associated Programme Diet. For example, if a student fails the Placement element of “MSci Biological Sciences”, they may be eligible for the award of “MSci Biological Studies”.

In all cases, the Programme Requirements/ Diet must be agreed as part of the Programme Design process and recorded in the Programme Summary.

3.16 Study Abroad

1. A Programme may include one term or one academic year of study at an overseas Higher Education institution approved by UCL.

Qualification Requirements and Programme Requirements

2. When designing a Programme, Departments/ Divisions must ensure that the Programme Structure meets Threshold Qualification Requirements in Section 6. These set out the minimum Credit and Academic Level requirements for UCL to be able to award a particular Qualification, but many UCL Programmes exceed these thresholds. Once the Programme Structure is formally approved by UCL, students must meet all of the Programme Requirements as defined in the Programme Summary, even if these are in excess of the UCL’s Threshold Qualification Requirements.
3. The following sections set out the options open to Departments/ Divisions when designing a Programme. Each decision must be recorded in the Programme Summary.

Programme Structure

4. At the point of Programme Design, the Department/ Division must decide whether the student will be awarded **additional** credits for successful completion of the Study Abroad, from the following options:

- An Undergraduate Programme Structure may include one academic year (nine months) of Study Abroad over and above the minimum number of credits needed to complete the UCL Qualification. The student is awarded additional credit for successful completion of the Study Abroad.

Example: A Bachelors with Honours must include a minimum of 360 credits. The Programme Structure requires students to undertake an additional year (120 credits) of Study Abroad. On successful completion of the Programme, the student is awarded 480 credits.

Integrated Study Abroad: The Programme Structure includes one module or one term of Study Abroad within the minimum number of credits needed to complete the UCL Qualification. The student is not awarded additional credit for successful completion of the Study Abroad.

Example: A Bachelors with Honours must include a minimum of 360 credits. Study Abroad is considered integral to the Threshold Qualification Requirements if it is part of these 360 credits.

Timing of the Study Abroad

5. At the point of Programme Design, the Department/ Division must decide when the Study Abroad will take place from the following options:

Undergraduate Study Abroad Year: Students spend one academic year (nine months) studying abroad. The Study Abroad usually takes place in the penultimate year of the Programme but may take place in any year but the first year.

Compulsory and Optional Study Abroad

6.

The Department/ Division may incorporate an Exit Qualification with an Alternate Field of Study into the Programme, with an associated Programme Diet. For example, if a student fails the Study Abroad element of “BA Music”, they may be eligible for the award of “BA Music Studies”.

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4 Types of Qualification

This section describes the typical attributes of the main Qualifications offered by UCL and provide a reference point for the development of Programmes and Modules. The following descriptors outline the basic Qualification; UCL Programmes may be supplemented by further learning, which may or may not be credit-bearing.

4.1 Undergraduate Qualifications

Level 4

Certificate of Higher Education

A Cert HE may be a stand-alone Qualification or a named Interim Qualification from a

Level 7

Integrated Masters with Honours Degree

An Integrated Masters incorporates the attributes and outcomes of both a Bachelors with Honours Degree and a Taught Masters Degree.
Programmes must include at least 480 credits. There must be no credits below Level 4, a maximum of 150 credits at Level 4 and a minimum of 120 credits at Level 7. The Qualification typically takes 4800 hours, or four FTE Academic Years, to complete.
Programmes may also include a placement or study abroad year.
Programmes fall under the Undergraduate regulations, and the Honours Classification system.

4.2 Graduate Qualifications

Level 6

Graduate Certificate

The Grad Cert is a short Programme or professional 'conversion' course based largely on Undergraduate material and taken usually by those who already hold a Bachelors Degree in another Field of Study.
Programmes must include at least 60 credits. There must be no credits below Level 5, a maximum of 15 credits at Level 5 and a minimum of 45 credits at Level 6 or above. The Qualification typically takes 600 hours, or half an FTE Academic Year, to complete.

Graduate Diploma

The Grad Dip is a short Programme or professional 'conversion' course which is considered equivalent to the final year of a Bachelors Degree. It is based largely on Undergraduate material and taken usually by those who already hold a Bachelors Degree in another Field of Study.
Programmes must include at least 120 credits. There must be no credits below Level 5, a maximum of 30 credits at Level 5 and a minimum of 90 credits at Level 6 or above. The Qualification typically takes 1200 hours, or one FTE Academic Year, to complete.

4.3 Taught Postgraduate Qualifications

grounding in research methods from which to develop an original contribution to knowledge.

The Masters must include at least 180 credits, with a maximum of 30 credits at Level 6 and a minimum of 150 credits at Level 7, and typically takes 1800 hours, or one FTE Calendar Year, to complete. On successful completion of the Masters, the student may progress to the Level 8 doctoral Programme, studying for a further three FTE years. Students must be registered on the doctoral Programme for at least two Calendar Years and, on PhD Programmes, students must initially register on the MPhil before Upgrading to the PhD.

5 Level Descriptors

1. Level Descriptors define the depth and complexity of each Academic Level and outline the academic skills, amount of prior knowledge and amount of learner autonomy required to pass a Programme or Module at that Level.
2. The descriptors are closely aligned to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and, together with the more discipline-specific QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, should be used as a reference point in the development of Qualifications, Programmes and

An ability to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the Field of Study).

Level 7

Students successfully completing Programmes or Modules at this Level will have demonstrated:

A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their field

A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship

Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the field

A conceptual understanding that enables the student:

- To evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the field
- To evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Level 8

Students successfully completing Programmes or Modules at this Level will have demonstrated:

An ability to create and interpret new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the field, and merit publication

A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice

An ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, application or understanding at the forefront of the field, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems

A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

6.1 Further Education Qualifications

Qualification	Abbreviation	Years of FTE study	Level	FHEQ credits	Notional learning hours	ECTS credits	Range of levels	

Qualification	Abbreviation	Years of FTE study	Level	FHEQ credits	Notional learning hours	ECTS credits	Range of Levels	Standard credits per Level	

Qualification	Abbreviation	Years of FTE study	Level	FHEQ credits	Notional learning hours	ECTS credits	Range of Levels	Standard credits per Level	Maximum credit taken at lowest Level	Minimum credit taken at or above Level of Qualification	Possible Interim Qualifications
Integrated Research Masters and Doctor in Engineering	MRes/ EngD	1-year Research Masters + 3-year EngD	8	180	1800+	90	7 & 8	180 at Level 7	30 at Level 6	2 years EngD registration	MRes, MPhil
Integrated Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery/ Bachelor of Science and PhD	MBPhD	10 years (5 calendar years MBBS + 1 calendar year Integrated BSc in year 3 + 3 years PhD registration in years 5-7 + 1 year of Completing Research Status in year 8)	7 & 8	780	7800+	390	4, 5, 6, 7				