



POLICIES AND GUIDELINES GOVERNING ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

OFFICE FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES AND REGULATIONS

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Introduction

The policies and guidelines governing academic programmes may be found in this publication.

Information on the Academic Council approved policy and procedures governing Curriculum Approval and Change may be found [here](#).

NUI Policy in Relation to the Usage of Degree Titles

(i) The Senate's policy of non-proliferation of degree titles should continue;

(ii) The usage of degree titles should be based on the following guiding principles and provisions:

- the degree titles BA & MA and BSc & MSc should continue to be regarded as generic titles and not exclusive to the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences and the College of Science, Engineering and Food Science, respectively
- however, the connotations of the titles BSc and MSc in terms of course content, duration, general academic quality and rigour, when used in the Faculty of Science, should not be undermined by the usage of those titles generically in other Colleges/Faculties. Accordingly, in the future, the usage of those titles by other Colleges/Faculties for new degree programmes should be acceptable only if, in terms of content, duration, general academic quality and rigour, the interests of the College of Science, Engineering and Food Science are safeguarded
- in other circumstances, Faculties should use their own Faculty titles, with any new specialism in parentheses, e.g. BComm (Management)
- in addition, the degree title Bachelor of Applied Science should be made available as a new generic degree title (Master of Applied Science being among the existing titles)
- consideration should also be given to the introduction of further generic titles such as BPhil.

National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

Level and Type of Award (i.e. Major, Minor, Special Purpose, Supplemental)

About the NFQ

The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) was launched in 2003. It is now the single structure mechanism for recognising all education and training in Ireland. You will see that all framework awards now have an NFQ Level (1-10) which tells you about the standard of learning and an NFQ Award-Type which tells you about the purpose, volume and progression opportunities associated with a particular award. The NFQ, whilst a national development, is also linked to similar initiatives that are taking place in other countries and at an overall European level.

LEVEL OF AWARD

- **Level 6: Certificate or Diploma**

Learning outcomes at this level include a comprehensive range of skills which may be vocationally-specific and/or of a general supervisory nature, and require detailed theoretical understanding. The outcomes also provide for a particular focus on learning skills. The outcomes relate to working in a generally autonomous way to assume design and/or management and/or administrative responsibilities. Occupations at this level would include higher craft, junior technician and supervisor.

- **Level 7: Certificate or Diploma or Ordinary Level Degree**

Learning outcomes at this level relate to knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles in a field of study and the application of those principles in different contexts. This level includes knowledge of methods of enquiry and the ability to critically evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. The outcomes include an understanding of the limits of the knowledge acquired and how this influences analyses and interpretations in a work context. Outcomes at this level would be appropriate to the upper end of many technical occupations and would include higher technicians, some restricted professionals and junior management.

- **Level 8: Honours Bachelor Degree; Higher Diploma**

All Honours Bachelor Degrees and Higher Diploma Programmes in Continuing Professional Development (comprising mainly undergraduate modules). Higher Diploma programmes providing progression to programmes leading to a Masters Degree or Postgraduate Diploma.

Innovation is a key feature of learning outcomes at this level. Learning outcomes at this level relate to being at the forefront of a field of learning in terms of knowledge and understanding. The outcomes include an awareness of the boundaries of the learning in the field and the preparation required to push back those boundaries through further learning. The outcomes relate to adaptability, flexibility, ability to cope with change and ability to exercise initiative and solve problems within their field of study. In a number of applied fields the outcomes are those linked with the independent, knowledge-based professional. In other fields the outcomes are linked with those of a generalist and would normally be appropriate to management positions.

- **Level 9: Masters Degree; Postgraduate Diploma; Postgraduate Certificate**

Masters Programmes providing progression to programmes leading to Doctoral Degrees. Postgraduate Diploma which may exempt from part of the programme leading to a Masters Degree. Continuing Professional Development Diplomas

Learning outcomes at this level relate to the demonstration of knowledge and understanding which is the forefront of a field of learning. The outcomes relate to the application of knowledge, understanding and problem-solving abilities in new or unfamiliar contexts related to field of study. The outcomes are associated with an ability to integrate knowledge, handle complexity and formulate judgments. Outcomes associated with this level would link with employment as a senior professional or manager with responsibility for the work outputs of teams.

▪ **Level 10: Doctoral Degree**

Learning Outcomes at this level relate to the discovery and development of new knowledge and skills and delivering findings at the frontiers of knowledge and application. Further outcomes at this level relate to specialist skills and transferable skills required for managing such as the abilities to critique and develop organizational structures and initiate change.

TYPE OF AWARD

Major Awards - Major award-types are the principal class of awards made at each level. At most levels, such award-types capture a typical range of achievements at the level. They include outcomes from many of the sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence appropriate to the level. An example of this is the honours bachelor degree at its level. This could be referred to as a major award-type at that level. A major award-type is expected to have significant progression options to higher-level awards, as well as options for transfer to other awards at the same level. Awards of the major award-type may also prepare learners for direct transition into employment. While named awards of major award-type relate to learning in a particular field, such awards share in the general purposes of their award-type. An award of a major award-type usually represents a significant volume of learning outcomes. The set of learning outcomes for such awards should be coherently planned to meet the purposes of the award.

Note: The guidelines set out by the NQAI indicate that for major awards, at least 60 credits associated with a programme should have learning outcomes at the level at which the programme as a whole is included in the Framework.

Minor Awards* provides recognition for learners who achieve a range of learning outcomes, but not the specific combination or volume of learning outcomes required for a major award. The associated learning outcomes of these awards form a component part of the learning outcomes of a major award.

Special Purpose Awards are stand-alone and are made for specific, relatively narrow purposes.

Supplemental Awards are for learning which is additional to a previous award. These could, for example, relate to updating and refreshing knowledge or skills, or to continuing professional development.

Note: The guidelines set out by NQAI indicate that with regard to major awards 60 credits of learning outcomes need to be at the level of the award; for non-major awards the balance of learning outcomes need to be at the level at which the award is included.

***Note in relation to Minor award type for Diplomas**

Extract from a discussion paper published by the NQAI in January 2006 and subsequently agreed with the Universities: Towards the completion of Framework implementation in the Universities.

Following detailed analysis and comparison by the universities of their non-major awards against the minor, special purpose and supplemental award-types, there may prove to be an argument for the determination by the Authority of a further major award type, an 'undergraduate diploma', at Level 7 of the Framework. The validity of this argument however needs to be tested rigorously in consultation with the universities and other higher education and training awarding bodies. The main features of the possible new award-type are that it has some, though not all, of the learning outcomes associated with the Ordinary Bachelor degree and would be described as having a medium volume of learning, i.e., a volume of learning in the region of 60-120 ECTS credits. On completion of the self-validation work on the non-major awards in the universities described above, the Authority has agreed to initiate discussions with the universities and other higher education and training awarding bodies to explore the issue of whether or not a new major award-type at Level 7 should be determined on the basis of the criteria outlined above.

For more detailed information on types of awards please access this link on the **QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland)** website:

<http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/Descriptors---Minor,-Special-Purpose,-Supplemental-Award-Types.aspx>

Credit Weightings and Duration of Programmes

UNDERGRADUATE

Honours Bachelor Degree 3/4 year	180 - 240 credits
Diploma 1/2 year	60 - 120 credits (typically 60)
Certificate 1 year	20 - 40 credits (typically 30)

POSTGRADUATE

<p>PhD/Practitioner Doctorate 3 – 4 calendar years full-time</p> <p><i>Notes: Practitioner Doctorate</i> programmes should include a significant thesis describing original research, to a minimum of 120 credits.</p> <p>In the PhD degree, taught coursework and generic Modules are modularised and enumerated in terms of ECTS credits, to a maximum of 30 credits over a 3-year PhD programme and 90 credits over a 4-year PhD.</p>	270 - 360 credits
<p>Taught Masters 12 -18 months full-time</p> <p>[i.e. 1 calendar year 90 credits; 18 months concurrently up to 120 credits 2 academic years 60 credits / year up to 120 credits]</p>	90 - 120 credits
Research Masters 1 – 2 calendar years full-time	90 - 180 credits
Postgraduate Diploma 1 academic year full-time	Min. of 60 credits (but less than 90 credits)
Postgraduate Certificate 1 academic year, part-time	Min. of 30 credits (but less than 60 credits)
Higher Diploma 1 academic year full-time	60 credits

Under Bologna the notional student workload per 5-credit module is 100-150 hours (including contact hours, student study and examining time). Larger 10 or 15 credit modules would involve 2 or 3 times the workload of a standard 5-credit module.

Normally, a 5-credit module consists of 24hrs lectures plus associated tutorials/ essays/readings/practical/course work OR the equivalent in student workload such as Literature projects, field courses, or indeed set reading assessed by written examination, work for problem sets, studying of legal materials and cases outside of lecture hours etc.

HEA Definition of Full and Part-time students

According to the HEA, **Full-time students** are students who are attending day programmes, extending over at least a full academic year and devoting their whole working time to their academic studies as far as is known; **Part-time students** include all students - other than full-time - who are attending programmes of university standard extending over at least a full academic year.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF QUALIFICATIONS DESIGNING PROGRAMMES FOR INCLUSION IN THE FRAMEWORK – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The following section sets out some examples of the questions that have arisen for higher education practitioners when undertaking the process of designing programmes for inclusion in the Framework.

When constructing major awards, which should be designed first, the programme or the module learning outcomes?

In order to give coherence to a programme, a top down approach is probably the more logical sequencing, certainly for new programmes. The design of clear programme learning outcomes, based on knowledge, skill and competence, provides a basis for direct mapping to Framework award-type descriptors and Framework levels. Modules that collectively address these outcomes can then be designed and articulated as module outcomes.

In redesigning existing programmes, the sequence may be the other way around, where a collection of related modules are being brought together to construct a programme, and the programme learning outcomes are being derived from the combined module outcomes and then mapped to the appropriate Framework award type/level.

Do all of the eight sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence have to feature in the programme outcomes of a major award?

The majority of new or existing major award are likely to accommodate all of the sub-strands, but the balance of emphasis in their representation will depend on the individual programme. Also, individual sub-strands of a major award may be at a different level to the overall level of the major award-type. However, the overall package of learning outcomes for a named award needs to correspond to those of the award-type to which it belongs.

Do all of the eight sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence have to feature in every module of a major award?

It is extremely unlikely that all modules will reflect all of the sub-strands associated with the programme they combine to make. The function of the modules is to cumulatively address the programme learning outcomes of a major award.

Do all of the eight sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence have to feature in the programme outcomes of a non-major award?

Non-major awards (minor, supplemental and special purpose awards) may often specify programme outcomes with fewer than the eight sub-strands. In some cases, their focus may be narrow and only a small number of sub-strands may be defined. If only one sub-strand is defined for the award then the level to which the award-type is allocated is decided on the basis of that strand. If more than one sub-strand is defined, a best-fit principle will apply. This will take into account the purpose and context for developing the award (and, where relevant, its link to other awards).

Is a programme designed using the Bologna Framework's cycle descriptors the same as using the National Framework of Qualifications level indicators and award-type descriptors for reference?

The relationship between national qualifications frameworks and European Frameworks is outlined [here](#). This construct indicates that it makes sense for the Irish National Framework of Qualifications to take precedence when identifying a reference point for the design or redesign of programmes for

inclusion in the Framework and for subsequent recognition in the context of the European frameworks. The greater level of detail provided in the Framework descriptors ultimately makes it an easier framework to use as a reference for programme design; it accommodates the design of non-major types and makes explicit how the suite of national awards relate to one another.

If a programme is designed for inclusion at Level x, do all of the outcomes associated with the programme have to be at that level?

There is no requirement that all of the outcomes of a programme at a given level (major or non-major) need to be written to that level. With regard to major awards, 60 credits of learning outcomes need to be at the level of the award; for non-major awards the balance of learning outcomes need to be at the level at which the award is included. The distribution of level outcomes across a series of modules that make up programme is a matter for the programme designer, in response to the needs of the programme and the anticipated learner. There are often introductory and intermediate aspects of a programme that will be at a lower level than the overall programme level. Similarly, some programmes incorporate exit points, which are at lower levels of the Framework.

How are exit points built into a programme designed to be included at a given level of the Framework?

If a programme has exit points at which awards can be made, the sequence of designing outcomes from the top of the programme still provides a logical starting point. When the exit points are being built in, they should also be accompanied by programme learning outcomes. It is important when designing a major award with exit points to keep in mind the minimum of 60 credits being at the level at which the award is included in the Framework.

Are the Framework level indicators designed to be threshold level indicators?

The Framework level-indicators (and award-type descriptors) are considered to indicate the 'typical' learning outcomes associated with the successful attainment of an award at a given level on the Framework, rather than being indicators of 'threshold' or minimum learning outcome attainment. This distinction has important implications for assessment design and for the development of assessment criteria.

How is an Ordinary Bachelor Degree with 180 credits differentiated from an Honours Bachelor Degree with 180 credits?

The Framework includes an Ordinary Bachelor Degree award-type with 180 credits at level 7 on the Framework. At level 8, the Honours Bachelor Degree has been allocated a range of credit from 180-240 credits. If you are designing an Honours Bachelor Degree with 180 credits, the key element that distinguishes it from an Ordinary Bachelor Degree with the same credit amount is the learning outcomes. Those associated with the Honours Bachelor Degree should be evidently at the higher level. It is likely that all of the outcomes in the final year of a 180 credit Honours Bachelor Degree will be of a level 8 standard.

IUA Principles on higher education entry routes

(Ref Academic Council 21st June 2013 and 17th June 2016)

“The universities will work together to reduce the number of entry routes to the minimum number necessary for efficient and academically appropriate allocation of places to applicants. An entry route is necessary and should be maintained (or a new entry route established) if:

- *it is required to admit students to a broad area of study (e.g. arts, science, business, engineering)*
- *it is generally accepted that a separate entry route is required (e.g. music)*
- *it is required to admit students to a specific professional programme (e.g. nursing, journalism)*
- *it is required to ration places where there is a significant excess of demand over supply (e.g. physiotherapy, psychology).*
- *it is required to admit students to a small number of disciplines or fields of study which are identified and differentiated strategic priorities for the institution in question.*

Where denominated entry routes are required to ration places on highly specialised streams or pathways within programmes that have restricted capacity, universities will give consideration to whether selection to such streams should occur post-entry on the basis of results in first and/or second year examinations.

Universities will, in a collaborative and transparent process, revise their portfolio of entry routes guided by these principles with a view to completing the transition to the new approach at the earliest opportunity consistent with the need to ensure effective delivery of their portfolio of programmes”.

UCC caveats relating to the IUA principles governing CAO Entry Routes

(Ref Academic Council 21st June 2013 and 17th June 2016)

UCC agreed to accept the IUA Principles subject to the following caveats which have been established to ensure the integrity of the strategic priorities of the university, the safeguarding of its financial responsibilities and the maintenance of the high quality of the student experience.

In accepting the Principles as a framework for reviewing the portfolio of CAO entry routes into UCC, the university reserves the right to maintain its autonomy in decision making regarding the revision of the portfolio of existing entry routes within the university and introduction of new entry routes.

Caveats:

1. **Strategic liability: UCC must retain the freedom to interpret the principles in support of its strategic priorities.** UCC recognises the different traditions and orientation of the Irish universities (such as 3 year BA programmes; comprehensive nature of provision) and their strong regional responsibilities. It also recognises the importance of the regional university as a driver of social and economic development within the global context. The application of the Principles must not constrain the future development of the university nor damage its competitiveness in this context.
2. **International recruitment: UCC must be able to offer entry routes which enhance International recruitment in line with UCC and national strategic priorities** otherwise the implementation of the principles risks imposing a significant strategic liability and damage to competitiveness on UCC and Irish Higher Education in general in the global context.
3. **Student demand: Strategies for programme developments and entry which have proven to be successful must not be constrained by the policy.**
4. **Duration:** In the context of a rapidly changing national and international environment, the agreement should be reviewed after 3 years and **require re-approval** in light of sectoral and international developments and progress, concomitant changes in IOTs and anticipated changes to the leaving certificate and second level system.
5. **Student experience: The implementation of the policy must not adversely affect appropriate student choice and the student experience:** The relationship between student engagement and programme identity is one of the key elements to retention.
6. **Sector wide landscape:** In agreement with other Universities, UCC would only implement the Principles once there is evidence of appropriate implementation by all universities simultaneously. **In addition, there should be no movement to implementation within the university sector before there is clear evidence of adoption and agreement to implementation of similar principles relating to CAO entry routes within the IOT sector.** Universities, such as UCC, with strong regional IOTs (working towards technological University status) are at risk of comparative disadvantage if the IOTs are not similarly bound by this policy. In the context of parallel developments in the higher education landscape, there appears to be some contradictions between the need for distinctiveness within a regional HE landscape to avoid duplication of provision and the imperative to broaden entry routes.

Interdisciplinary Programmes and Disciplines at UCC

This Policy for Interdisciplinary Programmes and Disciplines at UCC was originally approved by Academic Council (25-5-09) and implemented for all interdisciplinary programmes across the University. The revised policy below has taken on board comments from Colleges and Academic Board and was approved by Academic Council on 6th March, 2015. The implementation and operation of this revised policy will be reviewed after two academic years.

1. Structures and governance models:

Five categories of organisation are recognised in relation to interdisciplinary programmes/disciplines. Interdisciplinary degree programmes must be allocated to sit within one of the following categories which will, in turn, affect the overall governance and management of the programme (see below). The allocation to a category will be made through consultation between head(s) of the relevant School(s) and the Head(s) of College and approved by the relevant College Council(s). Categories 1 to 3 relate to programmes, 4 and 5 to the discipline. It is anticipated that as programmes and disciplines develop, they may move from one category to another.

1 – A degree programme led by a single School, involving the contribution of staff/modules from other Schools, largely built on suites of existing modules and overseen by a Board of Studies.

2 – A degree programme within or across Colleges involving several Schools with no lead School/ Department but overseen by a Board of Studies. A significant number of dedicated modules are usually offered for the programme and such programmes must appoint a Programme Director through a process agreed by the relevant College(s).

3 – A degree programme within or across Colleges involving several Schools with either a permanent or a rotational lead/coordination by a School/Department and a Board of Studies. Dedicated staff are appointed to support the programme, allocated by the head of College(s) to the contributing Schools. A significant number of dedicated modules are offered for the programme. Such programmes must appoint a Programme Director through a process agreed by the relevant College(s).

4 – An interdisciplinary subject involving a number of degree programmes within or across Colleges involving contributions from several Schools, with an overall Head of Discipline appointed by the President through a process agreed by the relevant College(s) and a Board(s) of Studies established as appropriate. A significant number of dedicated modules are offered for the programmes, and dedicated staff are appointed by the College(s). Such a discipline may be governed at a College level with affiliation to an appropriate School for research but ideally, such a discipline should be brought within an appropriate existing School within a College.

5 – An interdisciplinary subject area evolving as an independent discipline, covering a number of programmes and research activity established as a School in its own right with primary and secondary staff members, Boards of Study, Head of School etc.

2. Leadership:

At University level, the Registrar and Senior Vice President Academic will have overall advocacy for interdisciplinary courses/programmes and oversight of intercollegiate programmes and Heads of College should undertake a similar advocacy role and oversight for within-College developments.

For each interdisciplinary programme in categories 2 and 3, the relevant Head of College should appoint, through an appropriate College-led process, an academic as Programme Director. The Director should have responsibilities for the management and oversight of programme administration, budgets and project supervision. This task should be recognised by the academic's 'home' School/Department as part of his/her workload.

For interdisciplinary subjects under category 4, The President will appoint, through a process defined in College Rules, a senior academic as Head of Discipline.

For categories 1 and 5, the Head of School will have responsibility for interdisciplinary programmes. A Course Coordinator should be appointed by the relevant Head of School to assist in the management of the various programmes.

It is recommended that each Academic Unit involved in delivery of an interdisciplinary programme should appoint an individual staff member with responsibility for the programme within their Unit.

3. Resources:

To allow for the proper functioning and development of interdisciplinary programmes, it is recommended that they should be resourced directly, whilst also ensuring that all contributing Schools are given due FTE credit and appropriate support in relation to the nature and extent of their participation in the interdisciplinary programme.

Where an interdisciplinary programme is set within category 2, 3 or 4, and meets the criteria below, it is recommended that the programme be established as a Cost Centre within the College or relevant School as appropriate.

- i) The degree programme must be inter-departmental and inter-School.
- ii) Staff have been appointed specifically to the programme (categories 3,4)
- iii) The programme has a dedicated and significant core academic structure
- iv) There should be a relatively even distribution of FTEs between Schools/Departments/Disciplines. (Where one School/Department/Discipline attracts a significant majority of FTE for the programme, there should be no separate Cost Centre, and the programme should be coordinated by that School)

Where an interdisciplinary programme is established as a cost centre, resources should be allocated at College level into a separate budget code, based on the resource allocation model of the relevant College or as agreed between collaborating Colleges. The Programme Director will arrange for the transfer of resources/FTE to the participating School(s) involved in the delivery of the programme (e.g. to cover part-time teaching, consumables, equipment etc) though an agreed formula approved by the appropriate Head(s) of College.

Where the interdisciplinary programme is set within a School (category 1 or 5), resources should be allocated at College level to the School based on the resource allocation model of the relevant College or as agreed between collaborating Colleges. The Head of School will arrange for the transfer of resources to other participating School(s) involved in the delivery of the programme (e.g. to cover part-time teaching, consumables, equipment etc) through an agreed formula approved by the appropriate Head(s) of College.

These resourcing arrangements must be set up and executed in accordance with relevant College Rules and as close to the start of the academic year as possible in order to allow for the Head of College involved to plan for the allocation of resources.

4. Management and Operations:

a. Board of Studies

Each interdisciplinary programme will have a Board of Studies which will meet at least once per semester. The structure and composition may vary to reflect the nature of the programme, but generally should comprise at least one representative from each of the participating Schools/Departments/Disciplines teaching directly on the programme and be chaired by the Programme Director (categories 2, 3), Head of Discipline (Category 4) or Head of School or nominee (category 1, 5). Membership may include representatives from amongst staff teaching on the programme, Heads of relevant Schools/Departments/Disciplines or their nominees and College representatives. The membership of Boards of Studies should be described in general terms during the programme approval process.

Cognisance should be taken in determining the composition to ensure that the size of the Board does not inhibit the effective oversight and development of the programme. In the case of exceptionally large Boards of Studies (e.g. twelve or more members), consideration could be given to the establishment of a management sub-group to assist the Director in the day-to-day running of the programme.

b. Programme development and approval

In the initial phases of programme development, appropriate expertise should be sought from within the University. Agreement would have to be sought from Heads of Schools to the establishment of interdisciplinary programmes involving their particular subject/discipline area. The Registrar and Senior Vice President Academic should be involved in the planning process to ensure engagement of all appropriate disciplines within the university.

Where appropriate expertise is not available within the university, consideration may be given to the seeking of such expertise from outside of the University (within the budgetary allocation available).

New Interdisciplinary programmes should be processed through the normal University Programme Approval Process following appropriate consultation and consideration through the Colleges. External reviews on the full course proposal should, in as far as possible, be sought from relevant interdisciplinary experts. Interdisciplinary programme Module Codes may be developed in consultation with the Academic Programmes and Regulations Office.

All proposed minor changes to programme modules made by contributing Schools/Departments/Disciplines should be notified to the interdisciplinary programme Board of Studies in the first instance for final approval by the relevant College in which the programme is anchored.

c. Time-tabling:

Schools participating in interdisciplinary programmes must recognise that overall time-tabling must take equal account of the needs of interdisciplinary courses. The lead/coordinating School/Department or Board of Studies (for Category 2 programmes) should take overall responsibility for developing the programme timetable.

d. Examining:

Each interdisciplinary programme in Categories 2 and 3 should have a dedicated Programme External Examiner i.e. an examiner who has overall external examining responsibility for the course. In the case of programmes with very large student numbers more than one programme External Examiner may be considered.

For Categories 1, 4 and 5, Disciplinary externs will have overall external examining responsibility for the relevant interdisciplinary programmes

The role of the Interdisciplinary Programme Extern has been approved by Academic Council. The Programme External Examiner must complete an annual report and is responsible for programme review in relation to subject balances, examining student workloads and the general standard in relation to the programme. Academic Council has approved that the programme Externs views take precedence over module-level Disciplinary External Examiners in relation to the overall interdisciplinary programme awards.

[The detailed role and responsibilities of Programme Extern Examiners are covered in a separate Academic Council Policy].

e. Withdrawal or introduction of partners:

Any contributing School should be able to withdraw from a programme following appropriate consultation and safeguarding of students already on the programme.

Withdrawal of any contributing Schools/Departments/Disciplines from an interdisciplinary programme should occur in a manner that provides a transition period to ensure the integrity of the degree for the existing student cohort.

For example, for a three year degree programme, this transition period would extend to two academic years.

If the withdrawal is likely to lead to the cessation of a Discipline (Category 4), the university process laid out in the Policy on Cessation of Disciplines should be followed.

New contributing academic units may join an interdisciplinary programme with the agreement of existing parties in the programme. Associated changes to the programme must be processed in the usual way through the relevant academic bodies and approval processes.

f. Space and student home base:

The Programme Director should have the right to apply to the appropriate Head(s) of College in relation to the space requirements of the programme. Every effort should be made to provide students of interdisciplinary/cross-College programmes with some dedicated space which would act as a central focus for their activities.

g. Student experience/pastoral care

The Programme Director/Course Coordinator should act as the overall focal point for academic and pastoral care of students in an interdisciplinary programme. Initial contact for students related to particular modules should be made with the relevant School/Department/Discipline (e.g. for med certs, absences etc). Issues related to students registered for interdisciplinary degrees should be passed on to the Programme Director/Course Coordinator.

h. Staff allocation to interdisciplinary programmes:

For interdisciplinary programme categories 2, 3 and 4, prior agreements should be made between the Head of the home School/Department, the staff member(s) proposed to be involved in teaching on the programme and the Director of the interdisciplinary programme as to the level teaching commitment that will be provided to the programme. Ultimately staff are responsible to the Head of their home School. There should be explicit recognition of workloads of staff associated with interdisciplinary programmes in the overall workload allocations by the relevant Head of their home School/Department.

5. Research:

Where the interdisciplinary area is sufficiently well developed to support disciplinary-based research activity and postgraduate research, (categories 4, 5), the Head of Discipline/Head of School should have responsibility not only for the co-ordination and organisation of the interdisciplinary programmes but also for the development of relevant interdisciplinary post-graduate courses and research.

6. Review of Policy:

The implementation and operation of this revised policy will be reviewed after two academic years.

Dual Awards - Conducting Due Diligence of Participating Institution's Curriculum

Due diligence arrangements were developed by a sub-group of the UMTO Taskforce on Process Optimisation and IT in response to recommendations contained in an ISG Working Group Report on International Student Recruitment - 24-02-2014. The purpose of this arrangement is to review and confirm the appropriateness of the curriculum delivered by a participating institution leading to a dual award with UCC. In operation since 2015 this arrangement was formally approved by the Academic Development and Standards Committee (ADSC) on 16-11-16.

Due Diligence

Dual Awards - Conducting Due Diligence of Participating Institution's Curriculum

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between relevant participating institutions is agreed and signed in the first instance.

Articulation Agreement – Email Academic Secretary - Paul O'Donovan at paulodonovan@ucc.ie

Dual Awards -The granting of separate awards for the same programme by two degree-awarding bodies who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them (e.g. 2 + 2 BSc (Hons) Risk Actuarial Studies) (*as distinct from referring to these awards as Joint Degrees/Awards*).

1. A Dual Award may result in the establishment of a new programme in UCC or may involve entering into a collaborative agreement involving an existing approved UCC award.

2. Who Conducts Due Diligence of the Curriculum

- (a) Where a new programme is being established due diligence should be carried out during stage 2 of the programme approval process in UCC and will fall primarily under the remit of the External Assessors who are members of the Programme Approval Panel (PAP) e.g. BSc Hons Risk Actuarial Studies
- (b) Where the dual award involves an existing degree (e.g. SRM University – BSc Biochemistry/BSc Genetics (2+2 between UCC and SRM University, Chennai, India) due diligence is the responsibility of the lead College. In this regard a review of the curriculum will be undertaken by the programme team, in consultation with existing subject external examiners for the programme, who will report to the relevant College.

- (c) The PAP or Programme Team will have the academic expertise required to review the content and standard of the participating institution's curriculum and should ensure its appropriate fit with the programme of study to be undertaken at UCC.

3. What Curriculum Documentation should be available to the PAP/Programme Team to conduct Due Diligence of the Participating Institution's Curriculum?

3 (a) Curriculum Documentation Required from Participating Institution to include:

- (i) Statement of Programme Learning Outcomes achieved by student at the end of their programme of study in the participating institution;
- (ii) Full descriptions for all core modules plus module titles in the case of elective /optional modules
- (iii) Programme Marks and Standards, or equivalent
- (iv) Sample Examination Papers for each year of the programme

The Programme Team is responsible for ensuring that all of the above documentation is translated into English and for ensuring that there are no inaccuracies between the English and the original language versions

3 (b) The report from either the Programme Approval Panel (where a new programme is being established) or the College (where an existing programme is involved) should outline the curriculum review process undertaken, summarising what elements of the participating institution's curriculum was reviewed and a recommendation that the participating institution's curriculum is equivalent to e.g. the first two years of the relevant UCC programme. The report should also comment on any language requirements for the programme, as well as any other entry requirements that should be satisfied.

4. Due Diligence Report

The final report of either the PAP (where a new programme is being established) or the College Report (in the case of an existing programme) along with curriculum documentation from the participating institution should be held in the College Office and the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations.

5. Review of Changes to the Participating Institution's Curriculum

Changes to the participating institution's and UCC's Curriculum should be reviewed annually by the College to confirm that it meets with the original requirements and remains equivalent to the relevant UCC curriculum (e.g. the first two years of the relevant UCC programme).

6. Periodic Review of Programmes

All UCC programmes are subject to periodic review in accordance with the UCC schedule for same.

Modularisation and Semesterisation Framework at UCC

Modularisation

Modularisation: The Re-Organisation of Undergraduate Teaching at UCC

University College Cork began the process of modularising its undergraduate programmes in 1998/1999, starting with first years across all faculties. The remaining years of undergraduate programmes were modularised in 1999/2000.

What is modularisation?

- Modularisation is simply the process of reorganising undergraduate programmes into modules.
- Individual modules are grouped together to make up degree programmes. They may also be grouped together to make up subjects which, in turn, may be grouped together to make up degree programmes.

Why UCC Modularised?

Modularisation has a number of clear advantages for teaching and curriculum development.

Benefits of Modularisation:

- Provides for the fuller recognition of all aspects of student effort. The aim under modularisation is to reflect more accurately the various elements of student work including essays, tutorials, fieldtrips and practical work, as well as contact lecture hours.
[Further development under the Bologna Process is defining learning outcomes at module and programme level]
- Facilitates and incorporates off campus study, such as work abroad, work placement, field courses etc, as creditable modules in degree programmes.
- Provides for more transparency in the whole area of student assessment and workload.
- Can assist a student-centred approach to teaching and learning
- Helps identify over-teaching and duplication. Provides flexibility in the design of degree programmes, allowing a potentially greater mix of modules from different subject areas and greater interdisciplinarity.
- Facilitates the development of credit accumulation structures, thereby creating a number of potential pathways to final degree award. This should, in turn, lead to the participation of a diversity of student including mature and part-time students in undergraduate daytime degree programmes.
- Facilitates smoother participation by UCC in schemes such as ERASMUS/SOCRATES, which allows students to gain credit towards their degree during periods of study abroad under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)
- Facilitates greater ease of student transfer between institutions offering ECTS-based programmes.
- Facilitates greater ease of calculation of FTE and resource allocation

What is a Module?

A module represents a self-contained fraction of a student's workload for the year and carries a unique examination/assessment mark. The size of a module is indicated by its credit weighting. Under modularisation, each academic year (9 months) of an undergraduate degree programme is worth 60 credits, each calendar year (12 months) of a taught postgraduate programme is worth 90 credits. This is based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which provides common procedures to guarantee academic recognition of studies at institutions offering ECTS-based programmes. Credits are the value allocated to modules to describe the student workload required to complete them. The number of credits allocated to each module will vary depending on the fraction of programme workload it accounts for. An undergraduate module may equal 5, 10, 15 or 20 credits. Each module has a unique 6-character code, which contains information about the module. The first two characters EN in the module EN1001, for example, indicate the subject area of the module (in this case an English module), the third character indicates the year or level (in this case a First Year or Level One module), and the remaining three characters 001 identify the particular module within the subject area.

Individual modules are grouped together to make up degree programmes. They may also be grouped together to make up subjects, which in turn may be grouped together to make up degree programmes. Modules carry the subject code of the subject they belong to (see under Subject Index below).

Book of Modules

Module descriptions are contained in the Book of Modules, which is available on the web at <http://www.ucc.ie/modules/>. The Book of Modules is designed for use with the University Calendar, which contain the regulations relating to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and indicates which modules belong to which programmes. Students should refer to the Book of Modules to find out about individual modules and to the University Calendar to find out about how modules are grouped together to make up degree programmes. The University Calendar may be found on the web <http://www.ucc.ie/calendar/>.

Key to Terms used in Module Description

Each module is described in detail in the Book of Modules using the following headings:

Module Code and Title: Each module has a unique 6-character code, which contains information about the module. The first two characters EN in the module EN1001, for example, indicate the subject area of the module (in this case an English module), the third character indicates the year or level (in this case a First Year or Level One module), and the remaining three characters 001 identify the particular module in the subject area. The module code is followed by the title of the particular module.

Credit Weighting: The size of a module is indicated by its credit weighting. The number of credits allocated to each module will vary depending on the fraction of programme workload it accounts for. A module may equal 5, 10, 15 or 20 credits, however in a postgraduate degree the recommended maximum credit weighting for a module is 15 credits, excluding any research elements.

Semester(s): Modularised programmes will be taught in the following semesters:

Semester 1, 12 weeks: September - December

Semester 2, 12 weeks: January - March

Semester 3: April – August/September reflecting teaching/research undertaken outside Semesters 1 and 2.

No. of Students: Indicates the maximum quota and/or minimum number of students required for the module to be taught, where applicable.

Pre-requisite(s): Pre-requisites relate specifically to individual modules and indicate any prior requirement for admission to a particular module. A pre-requisite is represented by a module code. Minimum entry requirements and programme/subject requirements are contained in the General Information section of the University Calendar, under "Admission to Undergraduate Programmes".

Co-requisite(s): Indicates the code(s) of module(s) that must be taken in conjunction with a particular module. Co-requisites do not include core modules, which must be taken by all students in the programme and which are listed in the University Calendar under each programme.

Teaching Methods: The information under this heading details how the module is taught in hours per lecture, tutorial, laboratory session, field work, etc.

Module Co-ordinator: This section indicates the name and department of the academic staff member with responsibility for teaching and examining the module.

Lecturer(s): Indicates the name(s) and department(s) of staff teaching the module.

Module Objective; Module Content; Learning Outcomes: These sections outline the objective, content and learning outcomes of each module. More detailed information is available from the Module Co-ordinator, whose name is indicated in the module description.

Assessment: This section indicates the total marks for the module, as well as giving a breakdown of each element of assessment associated with it, e.g. Total Marks 200 Formal Written Examination 100 marks; Oral Examination 50 marks; Continuous Assessment (2 x 1,000 word essays; 1 Multiple Choice Questionnaire [MCQ]) 50 marks. Continuous Assessment may include any of the following: Practicals, Projects, Laboratory Reports, Essays, Seminars, In-Class Tests, and/or any other elements specified by the department.

Compulsory Elements: Indicates compulsory elements associated with the module such as Formal Written Examination, Continuous Assessment etc. Regulations governing attendance etc. may be found in the General Information section of the University Calendar.

Penalties (for late submission of Course/Project Work etc.): Indicates the penalty, if any, to be imposed e.g. for late submission of Continuous Assessment.

Pass Standard and any Special Requirements for Passing Module: This indicates the pass standard as a percentage of the total marks for the module overall (usually 40%) and indicates any special requirements for passing the module. For example, in some modules, students must pass Continuous Assessment and the Formal Written Examination independently to pass the module.

Formal Written Examination Profile: Indicate the number, and duration of the Formal Written Examination paper(s) and the Exam Sitting e.g. Winter 2015 or Summer 2016. "No Formal Written Examination" is stated where a module is assessed wholly by Continuous Assessment. The End of Year Written Examination will take place in Summer, unless otherwise stated.

Requirements for Autumn Supplemental Examination: Indicates the requirements for repeating a module examination at the Autumn Supplemental Examination, including any differences from the Winter/Spring/Summer Examination.

How Modularisation operates

The following points outline how modularisation operates generally across the university. Note: Colleges differ in some of the specific details. Full details of all programmes are described in the University Calendar and the Marks and Standards publications.

- i. Structure of the Academic Year: The academic year is divided into two Semesters, Semester 1 and Semester 2. All modularised programmes consist of modules to the value of 60 credits per academic year. It is recommended that a student take no more than 40 credits in any one semester.
- ii. Marks: 100 per 5-credit module, 200 per 10-credit module, 300 per 15-credit module, and 400 per 20-credit module. The maximum marks for each academic year total 1200, except where a programme consists of any modules that are assessed on a pass/fail basis (i.e. where no actual mark is awarded – such as work placement in some circumstances).
- iii. Change of Module(s): Depending on the College, students have either 2 or 3 weeks from the start of each Semester to change their minds and alter their elective module(s) for the year.
- iv. Formal Written Examinations: These are held in Winter and Summer, with a general provision for a 1½ hour paper per 5 credit module, 3 hour paper per 10/15 credit module and up to two 3 hour papers per 20 credit module. Where work placement is an integral part of a degree programme, the Formal Written Examinations will usually take place in spring of the academic year in which the placement is taken.
- v. Pass and Progression Rule: The general formula is as follows: To pass a year and progress to the following year (or graduate) students must:
 - i. Obtain an overall aggregate pass mark across all modules (e.g. 480/1200, or 600/1200 in the case of the College of Medicine and Health).
 - ii. Pass modules to the value of a specified number of credits (e.g. 50 credits);
 - iii. Achieve not less than a certain minimum mark in any module (e.g. not less than 30% (45% in the case of College of Medicine and Health)

The number of credits to be passed and the minimum mark to be achieved in any module may vary somewhat for programmes in different Colleges, but are generally consistent for programmes offered within the same College. The Pass and Progression rule incorporates the notion of compensation where it existed previously. Details governing individual programmes are provided in the University Calendar and/or the Marks and Standards publications.

Students must complete and pass a year of study to progress to the next year.

- vi. Autumn Supplemental Examination: Students failing to achieve the pass standard for the year at the Summer Examination Board may repeat failed modules in an Autumn Supplemental Examination, where there is provision to do so and if not disallowed by the Examination Board, or in a Repeat Year (see below). Marks from all passed modules are carried forward to the Supplemental Examination. The pass/progression rule is then applied to the combination of marks carried forward in passed modules and marks obtained in repeated modules.

Capping of Marks at a Supplemental Examination: In determining aggregation, progression, and the calculation of honours, the maximum mark that will be taken into account is a pass - 40%. The actual mark achieved by the candidate will be recorded on the student record.

- vii. Exemptions: Exemptions from attendance and examination in a module are provided for in most Colleges, once the module has been passed. Exemptions may be held for up to five years, with the exception of Computer Science modules, which carry only a two year exemption.
- viii. Repeating Modules in a Repeat Year: The number of attempts at an examination in any module is restricted (3-year rule; 4 attempts).
- ix. Award of Honours at Degree Level: Generally, students are eligible for the award of honours on the basis of the marks achieved over the Summer and Autumn Supplemental Examination Boards.

Degree levels are based on the aggregate mark over the final year (out of 1200) or on the marks achieved over the last two years (e.g. best 90 credits out of 1800) or weighted marks over three years (10%, 20%, 70% 2nd/3rd/4th year) Aggregate threshold for degree level equivalent to 40%, 50%, 60% 70%. Also profiling mechanism utilised in some areas (e.g. first class honours = 68% aggregate plus >50% of modules used in the aggregate of 1st class level)

- x. Repeating Modules in a Repeat year: Students repeating the year may do so choosing whichever of the two following mechanisms best suits his/her requirements.
- i. Students retain exemptions (and marks), if any, and must repeat all failed/absent modules. Marks capped in repeat modules in Supplemental and Repeat Year Examinations. **Note:** *For students selecting different modules not previously taken, there are no restrictions on the marks awarded for those modules at the Summer Examination of a Repeat Year.*
 - ii. Students relinquish all exemptions and repeat the year taking the full 60 credits. There is no restriction on the marks awarded for modules at the Summer Examination of the Repeat Year. **Note:** *Subject to capacity, all students - whether they have failed or passed - are allowed to choose this option in an attempt to improve their grade.*

Semesterisation

Academic Council made a decision on 29th June 2012 to change the University to a formal semester-based system. Further decisions on implementation and the structure of the academic year were taken on 7th December 2012. UCC changed to a semester-based system from the academic year 2014-15.

Semesterisation Academic Guidelines

1. To avoid excessive and unbalanced student workload, it is recommended that care be taken to balance module load and assessment. **A maximum of 40 credits may be examined by formal written paper in any one semester**, thus excluding modules assessed completely by continuous assessment and project modules. **Where there is a choice of optional modules, students should not be able to register for more than 40 credits in any one semester.** Modules that are taught across both semesters should notionally be allocated equally to each for this purpose. Derogations from these guidelines will be considered ultimately by the appropriate College curriculum committee for pedagogical or practical reasons.
2. It will remain permissible to **teach module(s) across both semesters** for pedagogical or practical reasons. Such arrangements will ultimately be considered by the relevant College curriculum committee. As an example, **final year project** modules may run across both semesters if desired.
3. Programmes with **work placement** in third year have two principal options. Firstly, Spring examinations continue to be facilitated by the Student Records and Examinations Office so a short (six week) second semester in third year is possible followed by a six month placement starting in April. Alternatively, schools may wish to consider a nine month placement (i.e. full semester). Remember to assign the work placement modules to the appropriate semester (2 and/or 3).

4. Since there is no formal examination board following Semester 1 (and students are thus not formally adjudged to have passed or failed a module until the Summer Examination Board), it is not possible to have one module as a **prerequisite** for another within any one year of study. If modules need to be linked within a year of study, they should be **co-requisites** of each other.

Further details may be found on the Semesterisation website at:

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/semesterisation/>

Regulations and Guidelines for Postgraduate Modularisation (Ref Academic Council, 10th October, 2008 and Academic Board, 7th February, 2018)

1. STRUCTURE OF TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

- 1.1. For new courses full statements of Marks and Standards and Calendar details must be completed, along with individual Module descriptions for all taught and research modules included in the taught postgraduate Programme.
- 1.2. Descriptions of any new academic modules for postgraduate programmes must be processed in accordance with the module template on the DMIS On-Line Book of Modules System.
- 1.3. The total credit weighting for a full year (12 months, Oct-Sept, including examination time for taught programmes) of postgraduate study is 90 credits, or *pro rata* part-time. The total credit weighting for an academic year (9 months) of postgraduate study is 60 credits or *pro rata* part-time.
- 1.4. Both Higher Diploma (level 8) and Postgraduate Diploma (level 9) programmes should be one Academic Year in duration and have a total credit weighting of 60 ECTS credits, or *pro rata* part-time. Exit with a Postgraduate Certificate (minor award at Level 9, 30 credits) may also be provided for.
- 1.5. A taught Masters programme (e.g., MA, MBS, and MSc) will extend for duration of 12-18 months, with an equivalent credit weighting of 90 - 120 credits, or *pro rata* part-time.
- 1.6. The minimum credit weighting for individual taught modules in a postgraduate degree is 5 credits; the recommended maximum is 15 credits, excluding any research elements.
- 1.7. Higher Diploma programmes may contain any appropriate blend of undergraduate (the majority at final/pre-final level) and/or postgraduate-level coursework; however, in programmes where the majority of modules taken are at undergraduate level, exemptions from modules in subsequent Masters-level programmes taken by Higher Diploma graduates on the basis of the undergraduate-level modules taken will not be permitted. Higher Diploma programmes are generally of a vocational nature or involve a change of discipline or conversion objectives.
- 1.8. In line with maintaining Level 9 standards on the National Framework of Qualifications, Postgraduate Diplomas and Masters Programmes should **not** contain undergraduate-level modules. On the basis of a reasoned academic case, final/pre-final year undergraduate-level modules not previously taken by the student may be included provided they do not exceed 15 credits in total; all other credits must be in postgraduate-level courses. [See also 1.13 below].
- 1.9. The guidelines set out by the NQAI indicate that for major awards, at least 60 credits associated with a programme should have learning outcomes at the level at which the programme as a whole is included in the Framework.
- 1.10. Modules developed specifically for Higher Diploma programmes should be coded at level 5 (i.e., two-letter subject code followed by 5XXX). Modules developed for Masters or Postgraduate Diploma programmes should be coded at level 6 (i.e., two-letter subject code followed by 6XXX).
- 1.11. Masters-level programmes must include an element of independent enquiry by the student to the minimum value of 30 credits for a Masters award of 90 credits, or 40 credits in the case of a Masters award of 120 credits. The independent enquiry component must be fulfilled through research dissertation, or industry/workplace/field practice related dissertation, or portfolio project or a combination thereof, to the total value of 30 credits or 40 credits as appropriate. The nature of this enquiry must be consistent with the knowledge outcomes expected at NFQ Level 9 e.g. 'a systematic understanding of knowledge at or informed by the forefront of a field of learning'.¹ This must consist of enquiry where theory is applied to practice or where theory is generated from independent

¹ [https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Determinations for the outline National Framework of Qualifications.pdf](https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Determinations%20for%20the%20outline%20National%20Framework%20of%20Qualifications.pdf)

investigation. A module code and description must be provided via the module template on the DMIS On-Line Book of Modules System. The module description must indicate clearly whether the independent enquiry is achieved through research dissertation, or industry/workplace/field practice related dissertation, or portfolio project or a combination of same. If a number of modules contribute to the total credit value for independent enquiry, a statement must be included in the programme description in the Calendar describing the combination of modules that make up the credit value for the research. Separate module descriptions must be provided for all modules. (ref AB 7-02-18).

1.12. Marks and Standards policies regarding pass and progression, award of honours, possibility of compensation, and repeat examination arrangements (e.g., for resubmission of theses, requirement to pass exams first time in some programmes, assessment of generic training modules) must be explicitly clarified for all taught postgraduate programmes and modules. Guidelines for these are presented in Appendix 1 of this document.

1.13. Possibilities to exit from Masters programmes with a lower-level qualification on attainment of an appropriate level of relevant credits (e.g., 60 credits for Postgraduate Diploma, 30 credits for Postgraduate Certificate) should be considered and specified in the University Calendar and Marks and Standards, where appropriate.

1.14. **Additional Regulation Approved by Academic Board on 27 February 2013:** In exceptional circumstances, students on a taught MA programme may be permitted to replace up to 15 credits of modules on the programme with alternative undergraduate or postgraduate taught modules. The alternative modules chosen must be deemed to be academically meritorious and still remain within the context of the programme learning outcomes. The alternative modules must be approved by the Programme Co-ordinator, the Head(s) of the relevant School(s)/Department(s) and the module co-ordinator of the proposed alternative module(s). Students should note that existing regulations require that the total number of undergraduate modules must not exceed 15 credits, and will normally come from final or penultimate year modules, except in the case of language modules

2. MODULARISATION OF RESEARCH DEGREES -

Masters Degrees

2.1. Masters degrees primarily being taken by research may have a total academic workload of 90-180 credits, to a maximum of two years full-time study or *pro rata* for part-time programmes.

2.2. The total credit weighting for a year (12 months) of postgraduate study is an academic workload equivalent to 90 credits. For a Research Masters degree, a candidate must complete a minimum workload equivalent to 90 credits.

2.3. The Research Masters degree award is based wholly on the thesis i.e., the recommendation of the Examiners that the required standard has been attained. A module code and description is not required for theses within Research Masters degrees.

2.4. A record of all successfully completed taught modules, where appropriate, will be included on a research student's final academic transcript, with credit weighting where appropriate; the thesis is not awarded a credit weighting on the student's transcript.

3 MODULARISATION OF RESEARCH DEGREES

Doctoral Degrees

3.1. The total credit allocation for PhD degrees is 270/360 credits for 3 or 4 years, respectively, of which a minimum of 240-270 credits, respectively, must be provided for research thesis work itself.

3.2. Practitioner Doctorate programmes should be of 270-360 credits and 3-4 years full-time in duration or *pro rata* part-time, and should include a significant thesis describing original research, to a minimum of 120 credits. Module codes and descriptions are required for all taught modules on a

Practitioner Doctorate Programme. Module code and description not required for the research thesis but credit allocation for research elements should be explicitly stated.

3.3. In the PhD degree, taught coursework and generic modules are modularised and enumerated in terms of ECTS credits, to a maximum of 30 credits over a 3-year PhD programme. In the case of a 4 year PhD, a maximum number of 90 credits of taught coursework and generic modules may be taken.

3.4. Modules developed specifically for PhD programmes should be coded at level 7 (i.e., two-letter subject code followed by 7XXX). The PhD degree award is based on the thesis alone, i.e., the recommendation of the Examiners that the required standard has been attained.

3.5. Training and coursework may be assessed on a pass/fail basis, or on allocation of specific marks; modules taken at PhD level should preferably not be recommended for audit.

3.6. The coursework and training elements within a PhD degree may, where appropriate, be allocated on a *Programme* or *Individual* basis.

3.7. In the case of thematic PhD *Programmes* within which students will be required to undertake a set 'cluster of modules', where passing or attaining a stated grade in modular elements is a requirement for progression through the Programme, this must be stated explicitly in Marks and Standards. In addition, arrangements for repeating failed elements, if appropriate, must be made in terms of Supplemental examinations at appropriate times of the year. Similarly, the possibility of exemptions in modules passed must be specified. Compensation should not be allowed in taught elements within PhD programmes.

3.8. In the case of *Individual* allocation of credits, students are recommended a set of coursework and generic modules by their Supervisory Team. Allocation of such taught elements should be on the basis of the training needs of the individual student and reflect the student's prior experience.

3.9. The process for recognition of External Modules is outlined on the [below](#).

3.10. Marks for coursework for taught elements of research degrees should be considered by the appropriate local Examination Board.

3.11. A record of all successfully completed modules will be included on a research student's final academic transcript; the thesis is not awarded a credit weighting on the student's transcript.

Recognition of Courses/Modules taken externally for Research Students

PhD/PhD Track students may get recognition for up to 10 credits over the course of their programme for modules or courses undertaken outside UCC.

Procedure to follow to gain recognition for courses/modules taken externally:

1. A student who completes courses externally and wishes to get this recognised and recorded on the UCC transcript requires the following:
 - a. A copy of the module/course description, including the number of contact hours and learning outcomes
 - b. A Certificate/Proof of attendance, including dates (with the Institution stamp)
 - c. Copy of official result (with the Institution stamp) with the mark recorded, or pass/fail judgment as applicable
 - d. A copy of the 'external module/course recognition form'
2. This documentation must be submitted to the relevant Graduate School for assessment and an appropriate equivalent credit value will be allocated where appropriate. There will be two deadlines for submitting documentation to the Graduate School each year – March 31st and August 31st.
3. The Graduate School will inform the student of the decision and will forward on the student number, name, and credit value to be awarded to the Graduate Studies Office.
4. The module will then appear on the student transcript as a PG coded module 'External Module' with a corresponding 5 credits or 10 credits.

Terms and Conditions

5. Recognition can be granted for courses undertaken from October 1st 2013 onwards.
6. Payment of courses delivered externally must be covered by the student themselves or by the relevant research grant (subject to prior agreement).
7. A student wishing to take a module/course externally should seek pre-approval from his/her supervisor. Please note that pre-approval to attend an external module does not mean that a module/course will be approved for credit.
8. The level of course undertaken should be commensurate with the qualification and may involve academic training, as well as generic and transferable skills.
9. Courses/modules which are taken for audit or which are not formally assessed, will not be counted for credit at UCC.
10. A student must be fully registered as a research student at UCC at the time when the external course was undertaken.
11. Courses may only be submitted for credit during the academic year in which they were taken. Retrospective approval is not permitted.

Appendix 1 Guidelines for Marks and Standards for Postgraduate Programmes

1. The timing of Examination Boards for postgraduate programmes may not be synchronous with existing Boards, and more frequent Boards may be required depending on timings of examinations. Currently examination Boards are held in Spring (April), Summer (June), Autumn (September), Winter (November) and January.
2. If External Examiners are not reviewing all dissertations for a Programme, Departments/Schools or Programme Committees may make arrangements with External Examiners for the sampling of such theses at the discretion of the External Examiners.
3. At postgraduate level, it is recommended that students pass all modules in an examination session (i.e., that compensation is not allowed); if, however, compensation is to be allowed, this should be made explicit in the Programme description and rationale given in the programme proposal. Honours bands for taught postgraduate programmes should reflect those in use for undergraduate programmes; however, different band structures and/or particular higher standards for progression through the Programme may be used if explicitly specified.
4. The principles for exemptions for modules applying at undergraduate level may be applied at postgraduate level, i.e., *All passed modules carry an exemption which is limited to a period of 5 academic years (2 years in the case of Computer Science modules) subsequent to the award of the exemption.*
5. Supplemental examinations should be provided for all taught modules; marks for examinations taken at a supplemental examination should be capped at the pass mark, except in cases where the formal university Mitigation process recommends otherwise. Research elements, i.e. the Dissertation of postgraduate programmes will not have supplemental examinations, however, on the recommendation of the responsible School/Department, an Examination Board may decide that a dissertation is a borderline pass/fail and may agree to permit the student to make minor corrections to achieve the pass standard (40 or 50 per cent, as detailed in the module description) for the Dissertation within six weeks of the publication of examination results. In such cases, the supervisor of the Dissertation will sign off on such changes and confirm to the Student Records and Examinations Office whether they have been completed satisfactorily or not, and the result will subsequently be notified to Academic Board for ratification. This option should apply only where examiners are satisfied that the research described in the Dissertation is fundamentally sound and that the fail judgement relates solely to the presentation of the Dissertation, which can be improved to a pass standard within the 6-week period. Where the corrections have not been signed off and/or they have not been submitted within the six week time frame, a fail judgement will be recorded.
6. Each Masters programme must state clearly in their programme Marks and Standards the policy which will apply where a student fails such that they do not fit the criteria described in point 6.3, i.e., where the work described does not meet the Masters standard, and additional research or a new project entirely is required, or else the candidate fails to meet the pass standard with the required revisions within the period specified. In such cases, programmes may specify one of two options:
 - (a) a candidate will have **one** chance to repeat the Dissertation module in a subsequent year;
 - (b) a candidate does not have the possibility of repeating the Dissertation module (unless mitigating circumstances apply). This option can only be specified if there is an exit

qualification which such candidates can take (e.g., Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate).

- Module forms for postgraduate modules should specify, *inter alia*: Credit value (where the equivalence between student workload and credit weighting is applied as per undergraduate programmes)
- Semester or Research Period (for research elements of taught programmes), where Semester 1 corresponds to (September/October – December)
Semester 2 corresponds to (January – March)
Semester 3 corresponds to (Research/Teaching) (April – August/September)
- Pass requirements
- Teaching methods
- Learning outcomes
- Assessment, arrangements for supplementary examination, and penalties for late submission of material, if any.

Academic Council, 10th October, 2008 including revisions approved by
Academic Council on 22nd March, 2013)

Regulations for the submission and examination of Dissertations in Taught Masters Programmes

(Ref Academic Council on 22 March 2013)

1. *Nomenclature for research components of Taught Masters programmes*

1.1 All research elements included within taught postgraduate programmes require module codes and descriptions, and are treated as any other academic module in terms of approval. Such modules should have a descriptive title referring to the discipline or field on which the research leading to the dissertation will be conducted (e.g., Research project in Field X, where this relates to the Masters programme title). Each such module must also have a named Module Co-Ordinator who oversees the allocation of projects to students on the programme, and is responsible for submission of final marks on DMIS.

1.2 To differentiate such research elements from major theses undertaken within Masters (Research) or Doctoral programmes, it is recommended that the term **Dissertation** be used to describe the written and submitted output of modular research projects or activities, and that the term Minor Thesis no longer be used.

2. *The role of supervisors of research within Taught Masters programmes*

2.1 The role of the supervisor of a Masters Dissertation is fundamentally different to that of a supervisor of a major research thesis, in that in the latter case a supervisor is no longer an examiner of their supervisee's thesis, whereas in the case of a Dissertation, the supervisor is the primary Internal Examiner.

2.2 For this reason, a supervisor is not required to sign off that a Dissertation is ready to go forward for examination.

3. *The use of intermediate examination boards*

3.1 In some Taught Masters programmes, the assessment is divided into two parts, typically taught and research, with (A) a Summer board to consider marks from taught modules, to verify if a candidate has met the standard required for progression to the next part of the programme, and to determine where supplemental examinations may be required, and (B) a Winter board to consider the mark for the Dissertation and results of any supplemental examinations, and to fix the final mark and class of honours, where appropriate, for the Master's degree. Examiners must be aware that the ability of the final Examination Board for a Taught Masters programme to influence the class of honours awarded to a student may be limited, on the basis of constraints imposed by an earlier Board having finalised marks for other components of the programme.

4. *Submission of dissertations*

4.1 Dissertations should be submitted to Departments and Schools directly, with a clear identification of the person or office to take receipt of such. Departments and Schools then have responsibility for circulation of Dissertations to examiners.

4.2 One soft-bound copy of the Dissertation per examiner, or as many as candidates on the programme are advised, should be submitted by the student.

4.3 For 90-credit programmes run full-time over a 12-month period, dissertations must be submitted no later than the last Friday in September of the year after commencement of the programme (or equivalent for programmes which start at different points) with the same deadline applying in a repeat year.

4.4 Module descriptions for Dissertations must specify penalties for submission after specified deadlines which will be imposed subject to any accepted mitigating circumstances.

5. *The nomination and role of External Examiners*

5.1 Each Taught Masters programme will have one or more External Examiners, appointed through the normal UCC procedures; more than one Examiner for a Masters cohort may be appointed where there are a wide range of topics covered by the research undertaken in the programme. External Examiners will be responsible for oversight of the examination of Dissertations within that Programme. It is recommended that additional External Examiners not be appointed for individual Dissertations.

5.2 The External Examiner(s) for a programme may read all of the Dissertations submitted by students on a programme or, where more appropriate, a sample of the Dissertations. In the latter case, the role of the External Examiner should be to assure themselves of the academic standards and ratify marking scales and ranges in relation to the judgements of Internal Examiners based on the subset of dissertations assessed.

5.3 All dissertations must be read and assessed by at least two examiners and a mark agreed.

5.4 Where all Dissertations in a programme are read by the External Examiner(s), the two markers would normally be the Supervisor, as Internal Examiner, and the External Examiner. Where a mark cannot be agreed, the view of the External examiner will normally take precedence, but the Supervisor must ensure that all relevant information regarding the Dissertation is presented to the External Examiner.

5.5 Where an External Examiner(s) reads a sample of Dissertations in a Programme, the two markers will be the Supervisor, as Internal Examiner, and a second Internal Examiner. Where a mark cannot be agreed, the view of the External examiner will be sought.

6. *The marking of Dissertations and arrangements for repeating*

6.1 Terms which are used for the examination of Research Theses (e.g., Award with no corrections needed, Refer back for major corrections) are not applicable for Masters Dissertations.

6.2 University-level Examination Boards will consider only final marks or judgements for the Dissertations from a Taught Masters programme, as opposed to actual reports. The judgement or mark will be recorded for the Dissertation module on the students' transcript (i.e., the thesis title itself will not appear).

6.3 On the recommendation of the responsible School/Department, an Examination Board may decide that a dissertation is a borderline pass/fail and may agree to permit the student to make minor corrections to achieve the pass standard (40 or 50 per cent, as detailed in the module description) for the Dissertation within six weeks of the publication of examination results. In such cases, the supervisor of the Dissertation will sign off on such changes and confirm to the Student Records and Examinations Office whether they have been completed satisfactorily or not, and the result will subsequently be notified to Academic Board for ratification. This option should apply only where examiners are satisfied that the research described in the Dissertation is fundamentally sound and that the fail judgement relates solely to the presentation of the Dissertation, which can be improved to a pass standard within the 6-week period. Where the corrections have not been signed off and/or they have not been submitted within the six week time frame, a fail judgement will be recorded.

6.4 Each Masters programme must state clearly in their programme Marks and Standards (see below for sample templates) the policy which will apply where a student fails such that they do not fit the criteria described in point 6.3, i.e., where the work described does not meet the Masters standard, and additional research or a new project entirely is required, or else the candidate fails to meet the pass standard with the required revisions within the period specified. In such cases, programmes may specify one of two options:

- (a) a candidate will have **one** chance to repeat the Dissertation module in a subsequent year;
- (b) a candidate does not have the possibility of repeating the Dissertation module (unless mitigating circumstances apply). This option can only be specified if there is an exit qualification which such candidates can take (e.g., Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate).

7. *Storage of dissertations*

- 6.1 Masters Dissertations from taught programmes should not be submitted to the Library for cataloguing, and will not be included in the UCC institutional repository. However, Dissertations from recent years should be held at a local (Department/School) level where subsequent consultation by future students may be desirable.

Sample Templates for Marks and Standards relating to the Regulations for the submission and examination of Dissertations in Taught Masters Programmes

Template 1, where repeat of Dissertation is permitted in a Repeat Year

XXXX DEGREE EXAMINATION	
Time:	<p>Marks for all taught modules including those wholly assessed by Continuous Assessment will be presented to the Summer Examination Board. For students failing to achieve the pass standard in the taught modules, there will be a Supplemental Examination in Autumn with an Autumn Examination Board.</p> <p>The Dissertation should be submitted to the School/Department by XXX. The Dissertation will be considered at the Winter Board. For students failing to achieve the pass standard in the Dissertation, or for students who fail to submit, there will be one opportunity to repeat the dissertation in a subsequent year.</p>
Modules:	<p>Students take 90 credits: http://www.ucc.ie/calendar/postgraduate/Masters/law/xxxxxx.htm ↓</p>
Marks Maxima:	<p>100 per five-credit module, 200 per ten-credit module, 400 per twenty-credit module, 600 per thirty-credit module. Total Marks 1800.</p>
Distribution of Marks:	<p>Distribution of marks and assessment details (including Formal Written Examination Profile) for individual modules are contained in the <i>Book of Modules</i> (http://www.ucc.ie/modules/).</p>
Pass Standard (module level):	<p>The pass standard for each module is 40%. Special Requirements for individual modules, if any, are detailed in the Book of Modules.</p> <p>On the recommendation of the responsible School/Department an Examination Board may decide that a dissertation is a borderline pass/fail and may agree to permit the student to make minor corrections to achieve the pass standard for the Dissertation within six weeks of the publication of examination results.</p>
Pass and Progression Standard (programme level):	<p>Candidates must pass all modules in Part I before proceeding to Part II. Candidates who achieve an aggregate of 40% or higher across all modules in Part I may be permitted to proceed to Part II and to fulfil the Special Requirements for the Autumn Supplemental Examination in their failed module(s), which must be passed before the Degree is awarded. Part I and Part II must be passed separately</p>

XXXX DEGREE EXAMINATION	
Insert Rules governing the Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate exit award, if offered	
Honours Standard (Overall Award):	<p>Students are eligible for the award of honours on the basis of the marks achieved over the Summer, Autumn Supplemental and Winter Examination Boards. To be eligible for honours, students must pass all modules. Note: For rules governing the award of honours at the Autumn Supplemental Examinations and/or in a Repeat Year, please see under ‘Supplemental Examinations’ and/or ‘Repeat Year Examination’ below.</p> <p>The grade of honours shall be determined as follows:</p> <p>First Class Honours: an aggregate of not less than 1260/1800 marks (i.e. 70% and above) or an aggregate of not less than 1206/1800 marks with not less than 70% in modules to the value of at least 50 credits.</p> <p>Second Class Honours Grade 1: an aggregate of not less than 1080/1800 marks (60% and above but less than 70%) or an aggregate of not less than 1044/1800 marks with not less than 60% in modules to the value of at least 50 credits.</p> <p>Second Class Honours Grade 2: an aggregate of not less than 900/1800 (50% and above but less than 60%) or an aggregate of not less than 882/1800 marks with not less than 50% in modules to the value of at least 50 credits.</p>
Autumn Supplemental Exams:	<p>Please refer to the Book of Modules for requirements governing the Autumn Supplemental Examination for individual modules.</p> <p>Students who fail individual taught modules at the Summer Examination must repeat all failed/absent modules at the Autumn Supplemental Examination, where there is a provision to do so and if not allowed by the Examination Board.</p> <p>Capping of Marks at the Autumn Supplemental Examination: In determining aggregation and the calculation of honours, the maximum mark that will be taken into account is a pass – 40%. The actual mark achieved by the candidate will be recorded on the student record.</p>

XXXX DEGREE EXAMINATION	
Repeat Year Examinations	<p>If a candidate fails (which includes fails to present) the Dissertation, the candidate shall have the option of repeating the failed Dissertation in the following academic year. The marks obtained in any Dissertation shall be capped at the pass mark, and subject to this, a repeat candidate shall be eligible for an award of honours if s/he satisfies the relevant requirements for honours.</p> <p>Students who fail the Dissertation in a subsequent year must withdraw from the programme.</p>

Template 2, where repeat of Dissertation is not permitted and there is provision for an exit award

XXXX DEGREE EXAMINATION	
Time:	<p>Marks for all taught modules including those wholly assessed by Continuous Assessment will be presented to the Summer Examination Board. For students failing to achieve the pass standards in the taught modules, there will be a Supplemental Examination in Autumn with an Autumn Examination Board.</p> <p>The Dissertation should be submitted to the School/Department by XXX. The Dissertation will be considered at the Winter Board. There is no repeat provision for the Dissertation</p>
Modules:	<p>Students take 90 credits: http://www.ucc.ie/calendar/postgraduate/Masters/law/xxxxxx.html</p>
Marks Maxima:	<p>100 per five-credit module, 200 per ten-credit module, 400 per twenty-credit module, 600 per thirty-credit module. Total Marks 1800.</p>
Distribution of Marks:	<p>Distribution of marks and assessment details (including Formal Written Examination Profile) for individual modules are contained in the <i>Book of Modules</i> (http://www.ucc.ie/modules/).</p>

XXXX DEGREE EXAMINATION	
Pass Standard (module level):	<p>The pass standard for each module is 40%. Special Requirements for individual modules, if any, are detailed in the Book of Modules.</p> <p>On the recommendation of the responsible School/Department, an Examination Board may decide that a dissertation is a borderline pass/fail and may agree to permit the student to make minor corrections to achieve the pass standard for the Dissertation within six weeks of the publication of examination results.</p>
Pass and Progression Standard (programme level):	<p>Candidates must pass all modules in Part I before proceeding to Part II. Candidates who achieve an aggregate of 40% or higher across all modules in Part I may be permitted to proceed to Part II and to fulfil the Special Requirements for the Autumn Supplemental Examination in their failed module(s), which must be passed before the Degree is awarded. Part I and Part II must be passed separately</p>
Postgraduate Diploma in XXX Or [where the taught element is less than 60 credits] Postgraduate Certificate in XXX	<p>Include details as appropriate.</p>
Honours Standard (Overall Award):	<p>Students are eligible for the award of honours on the basis of the marks achieved over the Summer, Autumn Supplemental and Winter Examination Boards. To be eligible for honours, students must pass all modules. Note: For rules governing the award of honours at the Autumn Supplemental Examinations and/or in a Repeat Year, please see under 'Supplemental Examinations' and/or 'Repeat Year Examination' below.</p> <p>The grade of honours shall be determined as follows:</p> <p>First Class Honours: an aggregate of not less than 1260/1800 marks (i.e. 70% and above) or an aggregate of not less than 1206/1800 marks with not less than 70% in modules to the value of at least 50 credits.</p> <p>Second Class Honours Grade 1: an aggregate of not less than 1080/1800 marks ((60% and above but less than 70%) or an aggregate of not less than 1044/1800 marks with not less than 60% in modules to the value of at least 50 credits.</p>

XXXX DEGREE EXAMINATION	
	<p>Second Class Honours Grade 2: an aggregate of not less than 900/1800 (50% and above but less than 60%) or an aggregate of not less than 882/1800 marks with not less than 50% in modules to the value of at least 50 credits.</p>
<p>Autumn Supplemental Exams:</p>	<p>Please refer to the Book of Modules for requirements governing the Autumn Supplemental Examination for individual modules.</p> <p>Students who fail individual taught modules at the Summer Examination must repeat all failed/absent modules at the Autumn Supplemental Examination, where there is a provision to do so and if not allowed by the Examination Board.</p> <p>Capping of Marks at the Autumn Supplemental Examination: In determining aggregation and the calculation of honours, the maximum mark that will be taken into account is a pass – 40%. The actual mark achieved by the candidate will be recorded on the student record.</p>

Procedures for Organisation of Training and Coursework within PhD programmes at UCC

1. Models for PhD training programmes

In UCC, three models of structured PhD education operate in parallel:

- A. **Themed PhD:** Prescribed coursework, training and other activities (e.g., work placement), weighted in ECTS credits, are defined in the University Calendar for each year of a programme, identifying the level of research in each year and specifying requirements for progression through the programme (e.g., passing courses, and reviews of research progress). Such programmes are typically advertised widely, normally involve a cohort of students, and may require additional criteria for acceptance beyond standard UCC acceptance criteria. The development of Themed PhDs follows the normal academic approval procedure, including final approval by Academic Board. In some cases, these Programmes may be externally funded and/or inter-institutional in nature. The development of Themed PhDs is outlined further in Section 7 below.
- B. **Unit Defined Structured PhD:** Individual Academic Units may recommend a common approach to structured training and coursework for cohorts of students in that unit (e.g., PhD in Microelectronics). This requirement must be specified in the Calendar if participation and progression is a formal requirement for students, and communicated clearly to students at the outset of the programme.
- C. **Individually-specified Structured PhD:** The non-thesis elements in this case are specified on an individual student basis. A student and supervisor will agree a suitable structured programme of study, within the agreed PhD credit framework, which is tailored to a student's background, discipline, and project area.

In all cases, the award and examination process is the same, and all PhD degrees must meet the standards of UCC's examiners, so the degree is not differentiated on the basis of type of structured training undertaken.

In addition, all PhD programmes should continue to include rigorous quality assurance steps into a student's progression in line with *UCC's Code of Practice for PhD Supervision* and the *IUQB Guidelines for Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes*.

2. Types of training elements for PhD students

A broad definition of the type of training involved in the structured PhD model is as follows:

Generic: broad cross-disciplinary research-relevant skills, e.g., writing, presentation, project management, information literacy, that may be either related specifically to the skills a student needs in their particular project, or involve provision of a wider range of techniques within a specific skill-set or

research field. Generic skills training should accelerate preparation for research, reducing time needed for individual training.

Transferable: transferable skills may be defined as those which do not relate specifically to a student's research, but are designed to develop other, particularly career-relevant, skill-sets (e.g., teaching and learning, entrepreneurship, business, language).

Disciplinary: a PhD training programme should offer the opportunity for students to develop key discipline-specific (as opposed to generic) research skills, e.g., advanced research methods in law or molecular biology. In addition, every student will require project-specific (i.e., *sub-disciplinary*) skills depending on the specific tasks they are required to undertake during their thesis research. Some modules on offer may be specifically developed for PhD students while others may be currently offered to students on existing taught programmes. Courses taken at PhD level may also include interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary modules (e.g., Master classes).

In 2008, the IUA-led 4th level Network launched the *Irish Universities' PhD Graduate Skills* statement which articulates aspirational skills which PhD students may require during their study (Appendix 2). It is recommended that all PhD students be aware of this statement, and discuss its content with their supervisor at the start of their studies in relation to their own skills and needs. Overall, there are a number of routes by which students may develop these skills:

1. The student's research itself, and participation in conferences etc;
2. Attendance and participation in structured modules;
3. External elements, such as internships², international placement, and summer schools/master classes undertaken during the PhD (as per policy document approved by Academic Council in June 2009);
4. Teaching, demonstration or tutoring undertaking during the PhD;
5. Prior learning and experience before commencing the PhD;
6. Participation in non-academic activities while in University (e.g., clubs, societies).

3. Principles for the Development of Postgraduate Training Modules

Principles for the operation of postgraduate training modules are given below to guide module co-ordinators and those who wish to develop new training modules.

1. The Dean of Graduate Studies should be contacted in the first instance to discuss the general module content, objectives, assessment method and target group. The Dean will provide advice and assistance on the development and approval process.

² If taken for development of skills alone, this should be awarded credits; a policy framework for PhD internships was agreed by Academic Council in June 2009 (for information on this, contact a.kelly@ucc.ie)

2. For award of credits to a student, an assessment which determines that the Learning Outcomes of the module have been met must be completed; this can take a number of forms, and should be evaluated on a Pass/Fail basis only.
3. While most such modules will be of 5 or 10 credit weighting, 2.5-ECTS-credit postgraduate modules may be submitted for approval in the specific case of PG-coded modules (i.e., those intended solely for generic postgraduate training, at levels 6 or 7) or other modules specifically and solely intended for PhD students (i.e., at level 7 or above).
4. A training module may be proposed by an academic staff member, or group of academic staff members, using the DMIS On-Line Book of Modules System.
5. Non-academic units may also propose training modules if such modules are approved by regular academic routes. In this case the Dean of Graduate Studies provides the academic sponsorship and oversight in relation to the module content and examination. The Dean also acts as module co-ordinator for these modules. Currently, there is no resource provision for such modules under the RAM.
6. **Creation of Module Description**

Module description(s) should be inputted electronically by the academic unit of the Module Co-ordinator or the College Graduate School, where appropriate, using the DMIS On-line Book of Modules System, for approval by the College. (Note: The classification of the module, i.e., Generic (PG code) or Discipline (subject alpha code, e.g., CM) will need to be known at this stage to allow selection of correct module code on DMIS. Modules developed specifically for Doctoral level programmes should carry 7000 level codes. The credit value of the module will also need to be defined at creation stage. Further instructions on creating module descriptions on DMIS may be obtained from the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations.
7. **Approval of New Module(s)**
 - (i) Module(s) offered by staff in one College to students in that College should be submitted for approval via DMIS along with the accompanying statement for inclusion in the University Calendar <http://www.ucc.ie/calendar/postgraduate/Doctor/page008.html> for approval by the College in accordance with that college's Curriculum approval schedule and subsequent notification to Academic Programmes and Regulations for publication in the University Calendar The Module or Programme Co-ordinator must signal the intention to offer such module(s) to the College Manager for discussion at approval stage. In the case of discipline-specific modules, a comment on the relevance of modules to particular cohorts of students should accompany the note to College for inclusion in the University Calendar.
 - (ii) Modules to be offered across Colleges are initially approved by the anchor College, in accordance with that College's curriculum approval schedule. On College approval, a report including the module and the statement for inclusion in the University Calendar should be sent to Head of the Graduate Studies Office for approval by the ACGSC (Academic Council Graduate Studies Committee) and subsequent notification to Academic Programmes and Regulations for publication in the University Calendar.
8. Following approval, training modules will be published in the section of the University Calendar <http://www.ucc.ie/calendar/postgraduate/Doctor/page008.html> on Modules for Postgraduate Training, under either the heading of 'Generic and transferable skills modules' (for PG-coded modules) or 'Disciplinary training

modules'. The module description should explain clearly the relevance of the module to particular cohorts of students.

9. Non-traditional research students (e.g., part-time, or those based off-campus) can usually only avail of training modules delivered by (a) block format (e.g., 3-day workshop) or (b) on-line, synchronously or asynchronously; however, due to the increasing numbers of such students (and those from outside UCC who may wish to take such modules), the delivery of these modules in such formats should be considered where possible.
10. Training modules are recognised in the RAM as modules for which resources should be allocated.

4. Procedures for students taking postgraduate training modules

The following procedures are to be used by students and supervisors in selecting and registering for postgraduate training modules.

1. Student Registration

1. PhD students are able to select modules from the range of modules for postgraduate training listed in the University Calendar, plus modules listed within taught postgraduate programmes, subject to availability and timetabling.
2. Dates of delivery of all training modules, and information on registration, are available to incoming students at postgraduate induction in October of each year. This ensures that module schedules are agreed and students can judge timing and workload considerations associated with taking these modules;
3. Students on training modules will be registered by the Graduate Studies Office (GSO) on completion of the module; it is the responsibility of module co-ordinators to keep records of attendance of students to verify that requirements for completion for each student, in addition to completion of the assessment, have been met. For students to be recognised for taking a module in an academic year, and academic units for providing these modules, registration needs to be complete by 1 March of that academic year;
4. PhD students wishing to take academic modules will need sign-off from their supervisor and the Module Co-ordinator. Acceptance may be subject to available places, timetabling and any requirements for pre-requisites, as advised by the module co-ordinator. Approved requests from students to register on an individual basis for academic modules will be submitted to the GSO for registration.

2. Use of audit and credit for Postgraduate Training Modules

1. To be recorded on a student's transcript, postgraduate training modules must be taken for credit, and to be awarded the stated number of credits a student must attend a satisfactory level of the sessions involved, and complete the required assessment, to ensure that the required workload associated with the module has been undertaken. However, certain modules may, with the agreement of the Module Co-ordinator, be available to audit (i.e., students may attend the sessions without

completion of assessment); in such cases, the module will not appear on the student transcript.

2. Students taking modules for audit will not be recognised in terms of FTEs allocated to those delivering the relevant modules.

3. Compulsory Nature of Modules

1. Where Academic Units wish to specify requirements for their students to take specific modules or groups of modules, the University Calendar entry for the PhD degree must specify this as a requirement for students registered in a particular unit (i.e., as currently appears for PhD students in the Department of Microelectronic Engineering). There is currently no minimum level of modules which a PhD student on an individually-defined PhD should take.

4. Examination, judgements and examination boards

1. Modules taken by students should not be considered by the examiners at the evaluation of the Thesis, as they **do not** bear influence on the award of the research degree. However, in certain circumstances, candidates may have to complete certain modules before they may submit their thesis for examination. In such cases, this must be specified in the Calendar and have been approved through the normal programme approval process. In addition, in such cases there must be provision within individual modules for students to repeat failed elements;
2. Module co-ordinators are responsible for entering judgements for their modules on DMIS. Postgraduate training modules will only record a **pass/fail** judgement on the student transcript;
2. A student who registers for a module but does not complete the required assessment must de-register from that module to have it removed from their record;
3. In the case of students taking academic modules from existing programmes, the judgement will be governed by the existing module description. This may mean a numerical mark will be returned and will be automatically recorded on the student's transcript;
4. Unless specifically stated in the University Calendar, an academic unit or supervisor cannot use the outcome of assessment of modules taken by a PhD student as a basis for any action such as refusing to progress to later years of study.

5. Oversight of assessment of postgraduate training modules

1. At the start of an academic year, staff involved in the delivery of postgraduate training modules should be approved as assistant examiners for that year. In the case of modules delivered by academic units within a College, this approval process will follow standard procedures³. Where modules are delivered by a non-academic unit, the

³ Assistant Examiners are appointed by the College on an annual basis on the recommendation of the relevant Head of School/Department.

names of such examiners will be forwarded to ACGSC for recommendation to Academic Board;

2. When a cycle of delivery of a PG-coded module is completed, the module co-ordinator will send a list of those students who have achieved a satisfactory level of attendance and completed required assessments to the Graduate Studies Office (GSO) for registration on the module;
3. Following review of all completed assessments the module co-ordinator will recommend a judgement (pass or fail) for each student and forward the list of such judgements to the Dean of Graduate Studies;
4. The Dean of Graduate Studies will then present these to ACGSC, to review and recommend approval of the judgements. AB will specifically devolve responsibility for this to ACGSC;
5. Following approval of judgements by the ACGSC, a list of judgements for students on each module will be passed to the Student Records and Examinations Office for recording on the students' transcripts;
6. In the case of a fail judgement being recommended for a student, module co-ordinators should have in place appropriate defined arrangements for repeating assessments;
7. The ACGSC will report to Academic Board on numbers of students completing and passing/failing postgraduate training modules, for information;
8. The profile of modules being taken by individual students should be monitored locally by the Graduate Studies Committees of academic units, with oversight by the College Graduate Schools, so as to support plans for the ongoing development of structured training within that College;

6. Registration of visiting students

Visiting PhD students who are currently registered in another Institution and who wish to take one or more modules at UCC can do so by registering as a Visiting PhD Student (e.g., as part of a Graduate Research Education Programme). In this case the student should visit the Graduate Studies Office with proof of registration at his/her home institution and collect a copy of the visiting student application form for signature by the UCC supervisor (if applicable) or the module co-ordinator(s). The student can then register as a visiting student, register for training modules as appropriate, and receive a UCC transcript with details of modules undertaken.

7. Development of Themed PhD

Thematic PhD degrees involve the collective training of a cohort of PhD students, who enter the programme at the same time and share common coursework and training programmes

(up to the value of 90 credits over four years), while undertaking traditional individual research projects which are of PhD standard.

Each Themed PhD degree will have normally a Programme Management Team which consider applications, and usually advertise places and select by interview, in parallel with confirmation of eligibility of candidates for PhD study by the GSO through the Postgraduate Applications Centre (or the International Office, in the case of non-EU students).

Key elements of a Themed PhD may be summarised as follows:

Core elements

- High quality thesis research where student is exposed to best possible supervision and research facilities, in a single or multiple institutions;
- Specification of compulsory elements in the University Calendar;
- Access to generic and transferable skills modules in the home institution;
- Provision of advanced academic courses and research skills training in the discipline concerned, including but not limited to areas directly related to the students specific thesis project;
- Total workload in modules of not less than 30 ECTS credits;
- Induction programme at the commencement of research, probably including both University-level (general) and programme-specific elements;
- Rigorous regular reviews of student progress with clear feedback and opportunities for early exit where progress is not deemed satisfactory;
- Co-operation with partners outside home institution where this could be demonstrated to significantly enhance the educational and training experience of students on the Programme;

Desirable/optional elements

- Systematic structured skills development for students, e.g., through Professional Development Planning;
- External validation of Programme (e.g., international advisory board)
- International partners with which students may spend time during their research;
- Regular collaborative events where students on the PhD, probably in different institutions, meet to discuss their work and undergo joint advanced training initiatives (e.g., summer schools, student conferences);
- Formal work placement element where students spend time for skills development or research in an external institution;

These principles are consistent with the criteria outlined by agencies funding structured PhD programmes.

Programme Approval Process for Doctoral Programmes (Themed and Practitioner)

Thematic PhD degree proposals will follow an academic approval process as outlined below, and each programme will have an individual calendar entry with its own entry and programme requirements. Unless otherwise stated in the programmes regulations, the general UCC regulations governing PhD students apply in addition to any specific programmatic requirements.

A specific panel for approval of Themed/Practitioner PhD programmes will consider all proposals for themed/practitioner PhD programmes, with membership as follows:

- Dean of Graduate Studies (Chair)
- Academic Secretary (or nominee)
- 1 independent External Assessor nominated by the Programme Co-ordinator and approved by Academic Board
- Head, Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations
- Head of Graduate School(s) of College(s) from which proposal originates
- Head of another Graduate School
- Member from a panel of representatives from ADSC/AB/AC appointed to sit on PAPs
- Support provided by the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations

Proposals for Thematic PhD degrees will follow the process below:

1. Proposal for Outline Programme Approval goes through relevant College approval process.
2. Proposal for Outline Programme Approval to Academic Board
3. If OPP for establishment of new programme is approved, a full proposal will be invited. It is recommended that the full programme proposal would be exempt peer review by external assessors unless specifically requested by Academic Board. This is on the basis that (a) most of the programmes have already undergone external review in the process of applying for funding, and (b) there is not a full programme to be approved, but rather a subset (less than 25% in ECTS terms) of the PhD degree.
4. Full programme proposal developed in accordance with local College arrangements that have been approved by AB. Full programme proposal is sent by the College Manager to the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations.
5. Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations convenes Structured PhD University Approval panel to consider and approve programme. Report from approval panel will be forwarded to Academic Board for noting.

Recognition of modules from other institutions

Modules offered within structured PhD programmes which are delivered by other institutions will be approved as follows, within the context of the Inter-institutional Credit Transfer Agreement signed by the Registrars of the seven Irish Universities in January 2011:

Where a module is a compulsory element of a programme, or where there are defined progression requirements:

In such cases, the module should be presented for approval in a UCC module approval form, with all required detail supplied, with a UCC module code. The module description should make clear that the module is delivered externally and should name the relevant Institution (and track the code used in the source university), but a UCC module co-ordinator who takes responsibility for the return of marks/judgements for students undertaking the module to the appropriate UCC offices must be named.

Where a module is an optional element of a programme:

Such modules will be listed in the programme with their local module titles and codes, and module descriptions would be published on the home institution's website only. These optional modules would not be considered for progression purposes and consequently would not be referred to in the programme Marks and Standards. Students taking such modules will register as visiting students in the host university and receive a separate external transcript of such coursework undertaken. It is the responsibility of the PhD programme coordinator/supervisor to ensure that the module has been passed and the transcript with relevant ECTS credits is forwarded to the Graduate Studies Office for recording on the student transcript.

Appendix 1. IUA/HEA definition of a Structured PhD, May 2009

The attached definition of a structured PhD has been provided by the Irish Universities Association. In addition to the attached definition and context for same, the HEA has determined that the following clarifications will be provided to Panel members in respect of proposals for structured PhD programmes for the PRTL Cycle 5.

- *Any structured PhD programme to be supported in full or in part by the PRTL Cycle 5 will contain subject specific education **and** generic and transferable skills training*
- *Appropriate placements, rotations and assignments across wide sectors of the economy are eligible for inclusion as part of the structured PhD programme*
- *Supervision will be provided through a principal supervisor with a supporting panel*
- *Funding will be provided for a maximum of four years full time equivalent*
- *Professional doctorates are not excluded from the consideration of structured PhD definition – alternative forms of theses are also acceptable.*

Contextual statement regarding structured PhD programmes

As with all PhDs, the core component of a structured PhD programme is the advancement of knowledge through original research. The goal of such a programme is to provide a high quality research experience and output, with integrated support for professional development. The structured PhD programme is therefore designed to meet the needs of an employment market that is wider than academia, through the introduction of a range of educational and training opportunities as part of the programme. In doing so, the structured PhD can better address the immediate research needs of students, as well as preparing them for future careers in a wide variety of contexts.

A central element of meeting the needs of both a broad labour market and of doctoral students is the development of the students' research, generic and transferable skills, through a formalised and integrated programme of activities. The choice of specific activities can be tailored to suit the experience of students, and to reflect the disciplinary requirements in each broad field.

Taught modules are integral to this programme of activities, and may cover both transferable skills development and discipline specific modules. In order to pass such a module, a student will have met the learning outcomes prescribed for that module. The student's academic transcript will record which modules a student has taken and measure his or her achievement.

The supervision of PhD students and the monitoring of structured PhD programmes conform to procedures established by each university, and are informed by feedback from both the student and within the university, as well as by the university's internal and external quality assurance processes. Supervisors and supervisory structures are provided with appropriate support and development across each university.

From the perspective of the student, the structured PhD is marked by

- *A high quality research experience and training*
- *Enhanced arrangements for supervision and mentorship*
- *Structured arrangements for the development of generic and transferable skills*
- *Advanced taught courses in their discipline*
- *Regular monitoring of progress.*

The traditional research thesis remains the most common way in which the research is described and examined. However, universities are also using alternative forms of thesis, including theses comprising peer-reviewed publications arising from the research with contextualising introduction and discussion chapters. In other cases linked to professional practice, such as architecture or the performing arts, a portfolio of creative or professional work is submitted, again in the form of a thesis with appropriate theoretical or critical context, which is then examined.

Each university has its own internal regulations concerning such awards. Where these publications, or the relevant portfolio of practice, have been developed as part of the student's education and training period within or attached to a university, completion of the appropriate structured PhD programme is considered necessary.

IUA definition of a 'structured PhD programme'

The following are key characteristics of a structured PhD programme in Irish Universities. Such programmes may involve inter-institutional collaboration.

- *The core component of a structured PhD programme is the advancement of knowledge through original research; at the same time the structured PhD is designed to meet the needs of an employment market that is wider than academia;*
- *A high quality research experience, training and output consistent with international norms and best practice;*
- *To support the original research activity, the following elements are included:*
 - *a formalised integrated programme of education, training and personal and professional development activities,*
 - *the development of discipline-specific knowledge, research skills and generic / transferable skills,*
 - *declared outcomes and graduate attributes in line with national and international best practice;*
- *Supervision by a principal supervisor(s), normally with a supporting panel approved by the institution;*
- *Progress to completion is formally monitored against published criteria and supported by formal institutional arrangements in line with national and international best practice;*
- *Successful completion and examination of the research thesis is the basis for the award of the PhD degree;*
- *Registration is normally for four years for a full-time student.*

Appendix 2. Irish Universities' PhD graduate student skills statement

This skills statement, a key output of the Irish Universities Association Strategic Innovation Fund Fourth Level Ireland project, describes the desired learning outcomes and skills that PhD students may develop during their studies. Students develop these skills through their research and additional taught modules. The development and availability of skills development opportunities must reflect student and discipline needs. Consequently, the skills outlined are not a rigid standard, but rather a guideline, which is fully compatible with the European Universities Association's Salzburg principles, endorsed by a HEA forum in March 2006.⁴ These principles recognise that advancement of knowledge through original research is the core component of PhD education, but PhD education must also facilitate additional skills development opportunities.⁵

The structure of PhD education in Ireland is under consideration from many perspectives. The government's *Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation*, the Irish Universities Quality Board *National guidelines of good practice in the organisation of PhD programmes in Irish universities* and the Higher Education Authority support the objective of developing PhD graduates with the skills necessary to develop and manage their careers across a broad range of employment sectors, including academia. To achieve this, universities are providing more structured support for students, incorporating research and generic skills development opportunities, empowering them to make a significant impact in their chosen career and contribute to the development of Ireland's 'Knowledge Society'. This support will aid students in the successful completion of their studies.

This skills statement aims to:

1. Communicate to students, supervisors and employers the skills and attributes of a PhD graduate.
2. Aid students, Graduate Schools, Graduate Programmes and other advisory committees in establishing students' skills development needs.
3. Inform the development of further skills development opportunities for all PhD students.

In fulfilling these aims the skills statement further expands on the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) National Framework of Qualifications PhD descriptors, which are as follows:

Purpose: This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.

Knowledge- breadth: A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of a field of learning.

Knowledge-kind: The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy review by peers.

⁴ HEA, *Graduate education forum-key guiding principles*, (2006), p. 4.

⁵ European University Association, Report on the Bologna seminar: doctoral programmes for the European knowledge society, Salzburg, 3-5 February 2005, p. 2.
http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/EUA1_documents/Salzburg_Report_final.1129817011146.pdf

Know-how and skill-range: Demonstrate a significant range of the principal skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials which are associated with a field of learning; develop new skills, techniques, tools, practices and/or materials.

Know-how and skill-selectivity: Respond to abstract problems that expand and redefine existing procedural knowledge.

Competence-context: Exercise personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent contexts.

Competence- role: Communicate results of research and innovation to peers engage in critical dialogue, lead and originate complex social processes.

Competence –learning to learn: Learn to critique the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.

Competence-insight: Scrutinise and reflect on social norms and relationships and lead action to change them.

To assist the development of structured PhD programmes many countries have developed Skills Statements detailing categories of skills that, students and supervisors may consider appropriate to students’ skills development needs. Consequently this statement draws on skills statements developed elsewhere.

The skills identified by the Irish Universities Association’s Fourth Level Network of Deans of Graduate Studies as relevant to PhD student education include the following, which is not an exhaustive list, and their relevance to students will vary upon experiential learning, disciplinary and professional development needs.

Research skills and awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exhibit knowledge of advances and developments in their field • demonstrate knowledge of research in related fields and disciplines • comprehend and effectively employ appropriate research methodologies • critically analyse and synthesise new and complex information from diverse sources • formulate and apply solutions to research problems and effectively interpret research results • exercise critical judgement and thinking to create new ways of understanding • demonstrate, where appropriate, a knowledge of health and safety procedures and their application in the research environment • have a broad awareness and knowledge of key relevant funding sources and grant application procedures • appreciate basic principles of project and time management
Ethics and social understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand, and apply in their research, principles of ethical conduct of research, including avoidance of plagiarism, allocation of credit and authorship and definitions of research misconduct • understand the relevance of research in society and the potential impact of research on individuals, groups and society

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where applicable, understand and apply the relevant guidelines for the ethical conduct of research involving people, human tissue and animals
Communication skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate effective writing and publishing skills • effectively use and decide on appropriate forms and levels of communication • communicate and explain research to diverse audiences, including both specialist and non-specialist • teach and support the learning of undergraduate students when involved in teaching and demonstrating
Personal effectiveness/development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operate in an independent and self-directed manner, showing initiative to accomplish clearly defined goals • appreciate key rhetorical skills, including how to persuade others of a viewpoint's merits, demonstrating and communicating credible suggestions to achieve one's aims • appreciate the importance of initiating new projects, proactively reacting to newly identified needs or aiming to resolve persistent problems • ability to handle difficulties in research or other professional activities in an appropriate way • critically reflect on experiences and act on such in a cycle of self-improvement
Team-working and leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and maintain effective relationships with colleagues • work in a collaborative environment • awareness of their own working style, that of others, and how they interact • understand how to acknowledge others' views, with a willingness to reflect on and critically appraise them • understand leadership in team environments, recognising the strengths of team members and work effectively to achieve mutual goals
Career management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an awareness of transferable skills and their applicability to both academic and non-academic positions and how they are applied in different circumstances • take ownership of their own career management, forming credible career plans • initiate and sustain networks and relationships that may encourage opportunities for employment • present themselves and their skills, attributes, experiences and qualifications, through effective job applications, CVs and interviews • understand the broadest possible range of their employment opportunities
Entrepreneurship & innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the role of innovation and creativity in research • demonstrate an awareness and understanding of intellectual property issues, appreciate and, where appropriate, contribute to knowledge exchange • appreciate the skills required for the development of entrepreneurial enterprises in the public and private sectors

- understand different cultural environments, including the business world, and the contribution that knowledge transfer can make to society

Coding of Modules

Module Code and Title: The first two characters (EN) indicate the subject area of the module (e.g. English), the third character indicates the year/level (e.g. First Year/Level One), and the remaining three characters identify the particular module.

A new module code is necessary where:

- a new module is being introduced
- there is a change in the credit weighting of a module
- there is significant change in the learning objective of the module
- a module is being taught at a different level than is currently the case
- the timing of the written examination paper for a module is being extended to an additional examination period/session (e.g. written paper currently taken in Summer and will now be examined in Spring also, e.g. to facilitate students going on work placement). In this instance new module code must be at the same level as the original module.

Multiple codes should not be used for the same module. Where the same module is taught in different programmes or is available in more than one year of the same programme e.g. First and Second Year of the BCL, a First Year/1000 Level code must be used. Where a module carries a 1000 level code in First year, the assignment of a separate 2000 level code to record the same module in second year is not permitted.

Exceptions: Where the same module is assessed in two different examination periods i.e. Spring and Summer, e.g. Spring examination to facilitate students going on work placement, the module must be assigned a different code, at the same level.

Postgraduate Modules

Please note the following when coding Postgraduate Modules, *(Extract from Postgraduate Modularisation Framework Document approved by Academic Council on 3rd October, 2008)*

- Modules developed specifically for Higher Diploma programmes should be coded at level 5 (i.e. two letter subject code followed by 5XXX)
- Modules developed for Masters or Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate programmes should be coded at level 6 (i.e. two letter subject code followed by 6XXX)
- Modules developed specifically for PhD programmes should be coded at level 7 (i.e. two-letter subject code followed by 7XXX).

Continuous Assessment for Supplemental Examinations – Academic Council Policy

Academic Council Policy in relation to repeating Continuous Assessment for Supplemental Examinations:

- Wherever practicable, a second chance opportunity should be provided to students who have failed Continuous Assessment, or particular elements of Continuous Assessment.
- The format of the second chance examination in Continuous Assessment need not necessarily be the same as that used for in-year assessment but, whatever format is used; the same competencies should be assessed.
- The distribution of marks between Continuous Assessment, End-of-Year Written, Oral and Clinical components of modules should be the same for Supplemental Examinations as for corresponding Spring/Summer Examinations.
- Under no circumstances should a student be allowed to carry forward an overall fail mark in Continuous Assessment that makes passing the module in the Supplemental Examination impossible, or very difficult. Module descriptions should reflect this policy. *Note:* Where an opportunity to repeat an element or elements of assessment within Continuous Assessment cannot be provided, the mark obtained by a candidate in such element must be carried forward to the Supplemental Examination.
- Where a candidate has done so badly in the Continuous Assessment component of a module at the Spring/Summer Examination that it is technically impossible to pass the module in the Supplemental Examination, an FITR (Failure Ineligible to Repeat) result should be returned.

Flexi Options

Undergraduate Flexi Options:

Entry Requirements: While no formal qualifications are required to take an undergraduate flexi option module, a place on the module is subject to approval by the Head of Department/School. Applicants will also be expected to provide clear reasons as to why they wish to take module(s).

Modules Available: Details of modules are contained in the [University Calendar](#) and the [Book of Modules](#). Applicants may take up to but no more than 30 credits of undergraduate modules which could be used to gain an exemption if subsequently admitted to a relevant undergraduate degree programme.

Permission – Following application to the Admissions Office, Head of School/Department will be contacted for approval and to ensure there is space available.

Number of Modules: Applicants will be allowed to take up to a maximum of **30** credits in any given academic year.

Module Requirements: Candidates will be expected to attend lectures and complete assignments as outlined in the online Book of Modules. There is an overall limit of three years from the date of first registration to pass each module. A student who has not passed a particular module by the end of a third year of registration will not be allowed to register for further study in that module.

Further Information is available from the Admissions Office and at

<http://www.ucc.ie/en/study/undergrad/what/flexioptions/>

Postgraduate Flexi Options (ref Academic Council 11th October, 2013)

Whether you want to study simply for interest and personal enjoyment, to get ahead at work or to get into a new job, a single module from one of our postgraduate courses may be suitable for you. We offer a wide choice of modules in a broad range of subjects across the disciplines within the university. Individual postgraduate course modules may be studied by anyone who meets the entry requirements for the particular course. *A postgraduate module may equal 5, 10, 15 or 20 ECT credits*

and you can take up to 20 credits of modules as Flexi-Option modules per annum. Any module completed may be used for exemptions within a maximum of 5 year on the relevant postgraduate course should you wish to continue your studies.

Entry Requirements: Applicants will be expected to meet the entry requirements of the programme that the module is part of.

Number of Modules – Applicants will be allowed take a maximum of 20 credits per annum.

Studying by postgraduate flexi-options will not involve the award of a qualification. A student who successfully completes a postgraduate flexi-options module, on a specific programme, may be eligible for exemptions if they subsequently apply and are admitted to that programme normally within a maximum of five years. Please note that for some courses a shorter exemption period may apply.

Permission – Following application to the Graduate Studies Office, the module coordinator will be contacted for approval and to ensure there is space available.

Modules Available – A list of modules should be maintained on the web site of each College Graduate School. It is the responsibility of each academic unit to place modules on this list. Further Information is available from the Graduate Studies Office at +353 21 490 3224

UCC Honours Marks Bands

[Ref: Academic Board meetings of 9/03/2001; 24/10/2003; 28/01/2004; 16/11/2011; 11/07/2012]

For all Undergraduate Programmes in the Colleges of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences; Business and Law; Science, Engineering and Food Science and in the Dept. of Epidemiology and Public Health in the College of Medicine and Health.*

***Note: Marks Bands for undergraduate programmes in the College of Medicine and Health are outlined in a separate table below:**

First Class Honours

70% and above

Second Class Honours Grade 1

60% and above but less than 70%

Second Class Honours Grade 2

50% and above but less than 60%

Third Class Honours (where awarded)

45% and above but less than 50%

Pass

40% and above but less than 50%

40% and above but less than 45% where Third Class Honours are awarded

Pass by Compensation

30% and above but less than 40%

College of Medicine and Health

(as applied by School of Pharmacy and from 2012-2013 adopted by the School of Therapies and School of Nursing & Midwifery following decision of AB in Nov, 2011).

First Class Honours

70% and above

Second Class Honours Grade 1

60% and above but less than 70%

Second Class Honours Grade 2

55% and above but less than 60%

Pass

50% and above but less than 55%

Pass by Compensation

45% and above but less than 50%

Schools of Medicine and Dentistry

First Class Honours

70% and above

Honours

60% and above but less than 70%

Pass

50% and above but less than 60%

Pass by Compensation

45% and above but less than 50%

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) Policy Document

A) INTRODUCTION

Government policy in Ireland has increasingly aspired to widening opportunity for lifelong learning with emphasis on social inclusion, equity of access to higher education, wider participation and partnerships with community, educational and business organizations. Consequently education providers, including higher education, must acknowledge the significance of learning obtained in a breadth of contexts prior to admission and formulate policies to enable formal recognition of such learning.

The aim of this policy document is to provide a coherent framework for the recognition of prior learning in University College Cork.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that allows students to gain admission to a programme of study or to gain exemptions/credit from some parts of a programme, based on demonstrated learning achieved prior to admission. UCC recognises that knowledge and skills can be acquired from a range of learning experiences. The policy provides opportunities for **access, transfer and progression** to education and training at third level. While flexibility in structures and increased opportunities for entry to UCC programmes and transfer between programmes (intra and inter institutionally) are central to the principles of RPL, it is essential that academic standards for all programmes are maintained.

B) CONTEXT

This policy has been developed in the context of the National Skills Strategy and has been formulated in accordance with the following:

- HEA. *National Plan for Equity of Access to Education 2008-2013*. In its recently published 5 year plan the National Office for Equity of Access has the stated policy objective of progressing 'the lifelong learning agenda through the development of a broader range of entry routes' and explicitly commits to 'support the development and implementation of a national action plan for the recognition of prior learning.' (HEA, 2008, 13, 48.)
- NQAI *Principles and Operational Guidelines for the implementation of a national approach to credit in Irish Education and training* (NQAI, 2004, 23).
- OECD. *Thematic review and collaborative policy analysis recognition of non-formal and informal learning: Ireland*. Recommendations contained in the OECD report of the review visit to Ireland in February 2008: 'From a lifelong learning perspective, broad provision of RPL would be logical so that a wide array of citizens can use RPL as an instrument to access education [and] to measure their existing skills, knowledge and competences.' (OECD, 2008. 65).

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an important element of EU policy for widening access to qualifications and supporting lifelong learning. The Irish Government has made a commitment to support RPL⁶.

⁶ (Government of Ireland, 1998, 2000; Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999)

C) DEFINITIONS

Prior learning is learning which has taken place prior to admission to a programme. Such learning can be certified or experiential.

Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) is a process of formal acknowledgement of formal (certified) learning that has taken place and has been recognised prior to student enrolling on a programme. It may support the applicant's application for **admission** to a programme or allow for **exemptions** from some parts of a programme.

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) is a process of awarding credit for learning that has not previously been accredited, that is, experiential learning (both non-formal and informal). It may support the applicant's application for **admission** to a programme overall for **exemptions** from some parts of a programme.

Experiential learning is achieved parallel to mainstream systems of education and training and does not lead to an award. Experiential learning includes:

Non-formal learning, which can take the form of organised, structured or planned training that may be assessed but does not lead to formal certification.

Informal learning encompasses learning gained through life experience in work, community or other settings.

For the purpose of this policy document the generic term RPL will be used and will incorporate both terms, Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) and Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL). RPCL and RPEL will be used where precise clarification between the two terms is required.

**UCC RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY
(Ref Academic Council April 2010)**

The following principles apply to the implementation of RPL within UCC.

1. General Policy

1.1 Recognition of prior learning is a part of UCC's procedure for the admission, exemption and the award of credit.

1.2 All Colleges are required to ensure that their policies and procedures for the recognition of prior learning are clearly stated and documented, and readily available to all applicants, academic and administrative staff as required.

1.3 The modules and programmes eligible for recognition of prior learning shall be identified and specific assessment criteria and procedures shall be defined, documented and made available as required under 1.2.

1.4 The focus of the RPL process shall be on the achievement of learning outcomes rather than the experience of learning.

1.5 The first point of contact is the College which is responsible for overseeing the RPL application process. The final decision regarding the granting of exemption for admission or transfer rests with the appropriate academic unit, in consultation with relevant officer(s) as appropriate and shall be reported to the relevant Examination Board.

2. Quality Principles

2.1 The policies and procedures for the recognition of prior learning are embedded within the quality assurance procedures of UCC. Therefore they shall be included in the academic regulations of each programme as appropriate.

2.2 The academic standards for the outcome of the RPL process must be maintained in such a way that the academic standards of awards of UCC are maintained.

2.3 In defining their arrangements, Colleges shall ensure that their process of application, assessment and recognition shall be comprehensive, transparent, consistent and fair, and conducted within a reasonable time frame.

3. Assessment Principles

3.1 Specific RPL procedures shall be put in place by individual programmes and modules at the design stage and if implemented, post-programme approval shall be approved by College Council in accordance with College procedures.

3.2 As part of the assessment for RPL applicants must demonstrate that they understand the theory as well as the practical learning elements of the module.

3.3. In seeking recognition under RPL prior learning must be evidenced in writing or through the medium appropriate to the particular learning outcomes of the module and accompanied by authentication as necessary.

3.4. For RPL the learning outcomes refers to learner's knowledge, understanding, skills and/or competences, i.e. what the learner knows and can do to the required standard as a result of prior learning.

3.5 Recognition will normally be given:

- For complete modules only;
- Where all of the learning outcomes of a module have been achieved;
- It is at the discretion of each programme to determine the proportion of credit which may be awarded at each stage of study up to a maximum of 50% of the total credits available for the programme overall. There is no requirement that credit is granted at any stage of a programme and, in particular, programme co-ordinators shall be mindful of professional and statutory body requirements and the appropriateness of awarding RPL in the final year.

Candidates will normally be entitled to apply for exemption for entire modules only, not parts of them. Exceptionally, when the module is composed of clearly distinguishable and distinct parts, for example theory + practical components, exemptions from a component may be permitted with the approval of the College Council in accordance with agreed College procedures.

3.6 Credit gained by RPL cannot be double-counted for purposes of second qualification at the same level.

3.7 The applicant is responsible for submitting relevant evidence in accordance with appropriate programme-specific guidelines. An applicant who is admitted via RPL and is found to have submitted false or misleading evidence is in breach of the University regulations. False or misleading evidence is a disciplinary matter and in all cases will be referred to the Student Discipline Committee.

3.8 Upon a submission of RPL application and relevant evidence, the applicant will be given feedback on the judgement and may be permitted to re-submit on one subsequent occasion.

3.9 The student record entry in respect of RPL is undertaken within the Student Records and Examination Office upon notification by the Examination Board.

4. Assessment Criteria

The following key criteria will be used by staff to help them to determine if the evidence of learning presented is appropriate and sufficient.

4.1 Validity Does the prior learning presented match the learning outcomes required by the relevant module? Is the prior learning being presented by the applicant at the academic level required.

4.2 Sufficiency Is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the learning outcomes have been achieved?

4.3 Authenticity Can it be verified that the prior learning is that of the applicant?

4.4 Reliability Is the evidence of prior learning presented reliable?

4.5 Currency Is the prior learning achieved and being assessed current? Is it up to date with current knowledge and practice?

D) RPL PROCESS

1. The applicant initiates the process by providing appropriate outline information in support of their application for RPCL and for RPEL.
2. Consultation shall be arranged in accordance with College procedures and applicants shall receive advice and guidance for preparation of evidence and verification of prior learning in the required format
3. Initial judgment is made by the programme co-ordinator or designated member of staff as to whether the application for RPL is appropriate and the process may continue. If decided that it should continue, the applicant must then submit evidence of learning by providing the required detailed information to support the application within the specified timeframe.
4. The learning evidence shall be submitted to the programme co-ordinator or designated member of staff who shall make the submission on behalf of the applicant to the relevant College authority.
5. The outcome of the assessment process once verified shall be notified to the Examination Board as part of the student profile for assessment and the outcome reported to Student Records and Examinations Office for entry onto the student record.
6. The recommendation on the outcome of the assessment process for RPL prior to verification by the Examination Board shall be notified to the applicant within a reasonable period of time.

E) IMPLEMENTATION

It is for Colleges to design and agree local arrangements for the implementation of this policy in keeping with the universities strategic activities (Leading Action point 3 and 4, page 11 and Key Projects numbers 2, 3 and 4, page 18) and in the context of subject and professional body requirements.

F) REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed, in the first instance within two years from the date of adoption by Academic Council and a full policy review will be undertaken after five years. The review will be led by the Vice President for Teaching and Learning.

Approved by Academic Council April 2010

Due for review 2012

IELTS REQUIREMENTS: EU and Non-EU at UCC

All **EU UG** = require a 6.5 (except BSc Speech and Language Therapy, requires a 7.0 from 2013-14)

All **EU PG** = same requirements as Non EU PG as detailed in the table

NON-EU				
College	Non EU UG	Non EU PG	Caveat	AB APPROVAL
CACSSS	6.5	6.5	<i>with the consent of the Head of Department the score could be varied to 6.0 provided that the Head of Department provides justification for the variation and that s/he indicates what support arrangements would be in place for the student together with assurance that the department would pay for those support arrangements</i>	AB 20 Jan 2009
CB&L	6.5 for Law AND 6.0 for Commerce	6.5	In Law – Research PG programmes – 6.5 can be changed at the discretion of the Graduate Studies Committee	AB 25 January 2006
CSEFS	6.0	6.5 from 2013-14	Architecture 6.5 which was approved by Academic Board May 2008 With a minimum of 6.0 in each category	Ibid Academic Board 06-11-13 Chair action 21-10-13; Academic Board 02-10-13; Academic Board 11-07-12

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College	Non EU UG	Non EU PG	Caveat	AB APPROVAL
CM&H	<p>6.0 for non Clinical</p> <p>Clinical programmes such as Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing and Clinical Pharmacy would continue to be 6.5</p> <p>Except for BSc Speech and Language Therapy must be 7.0 (from 2013-14)</p>	6.0 PG Research	<p>No individual component must be less than 6.5. This requirement would also apply to equivalent programmes such as TOEFL.</p> <p>With no scores in individual sections less than 6.5.</p> <p>Nursing CPD Modules - Applicants for Nursing CPD modules who do not hold an up-to-date IELTS certificate showing the requisite Academic Board approved CM&H scores must demonstrate evidence of appropriate work experience within an English language environment for at least the previous 2 years.</p>	<p>Ibid</p> <p>Caveat AB 25-04-12</p> <p>Special Academic Board 11-07-12</p> <p>Academic Board 15-01-14</p>
English Language Summer School in China		Students who pass the course shall be deemed to have satisfied the IELTS requirements for admission to degree programmes in UCC requiring a minimum IELTS score of 6.0 (or equivalent)		Approved by Special AB 29 June 2006

Source: Aine Flynn, Academic Secretariat, Registrar's Office

Extract From European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

STANDARD

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

GUIDELINES

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities which ensure that programmes are well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency.

The quality assurance of programmes and awards are expected to include:

- development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes;
- careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content;
- specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional);
- availability of appropriate learning resources;
- formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme;
- monitoring of the progress and achievements of students;
- regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members);
- regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations;
- participation of students in quality assurance activities.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Guidelines on Writing Programme Learning Outcomes

Programme Learning Outcomes

The Academic Council (2008) agreed that all programmes should be written with learning outcomes described during the academic year 2008/09 for publication in the 2009/10 University Calendar. Where exit awards are provided for in a programme, e.g. Diploma in Law is an exit point from the Evening BCL Degree, the Postgraduate Certificate in is an exit point from the Postgraduate Diploma/ Masters inthese exit awards should also be accompanied by Learning Outcomes.

The Working Group re-iterates that it is the responsibility of Colleges/Faculties to ensure (a) that programme learning outcomes are written for all programmes for which the body is responsible and (b) that they are written according to the guidelines approved by Academic Council.

Guidelines for Writing Programme Learning Outcomes

Programme learning outcomes can be very helpful to prospective students, employers and external examiners to give them a “feel” for what the programme (degree or diploma) involves. Programme learning outcomes describe the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that it is intended that graduates of the programme will be able to demonstrate. In some cases the programme learning outcomes are specified by regulatory and professional bodies. In other cases, the programme learning outcomes are the responsibility of the programme co-ordinator who has an overall view of the programme and writes the programme learning outcomes in co-operation with those teaching the various modules on the programme.

The guidelines for writing learning outcomes for programmes are the same as those for writing learning outcomes for modules. The general guidance in the literature is that there should be 5 – 10 learning outcomes for a programme and that only the minimum number of outcomes considered to be essential be included.

There are two types of programme learning outcomes discussed in the literature. The first type of learning outcome refers to those learning outcomes that can be assessed during the programme, i.e. within the various modules. The second type of learning outcome may not be assessed at all but give an indication to employers and other agencies the type of standard of practical performance that graduates of the programme will display at the end of the programme. These “aspirational” or “desirable” learning outcomes indicate what a good quality student would be expected to achieve by the end of the programme, e.g. one of the programme learning outcomes specified by the Institution of Engineers of Ireland is that students will be able to “communicate effectively with the engineering community and with society at large”. This may be considered as an aspirational or desirable learning outcome since it could be difficult to assess this learning outcome before the student has entered the engineering profession.

When writing the programme learning outcomes, it is recommended that one should not simply compile all of the learning outcomes from all of the modules in a programme. A programme may be more than simply the sum of the various component modules. For example, there may be some overarching programme learning outcomes, e.g. formulate hypotheses, analyse data

and draw conclusions. In addition, one may wish to include some aspirational learning outcomes as discussed above.

When writing programme learning outcomes, it is common practice to use an initial statement like “**On successful completion of this programme, students should be able to:**”. This statement is followed by the list of learning outcomes written according to the guidelines already issued for writing module learning outcomes. For example, some of the Programme Learning Outcomes for an engineering degree are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Example of programme learning outcomes for an undergraduate Engineering degree

<p>On successful completion of this programme, students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Derive and apply solutions from knowledge of sciences, engineering sciences, technology and mathematics.• Identify, formulate, analyse and solve engineering problems.• Design a system, component or process to meet specified needs and to design and conduct experiments to analyse and interpret data.• Work effectively as an individual, in teams and in multi-disciplinary settings together with the capacity to undertake lifelong learning.• Communicate effectively with the engineering community and with society at large.

See [here](#) for guidelines governing **Module Learning Outcomes**

DEVELOPING PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

Each major award to be included in the Framework should be designed around a series of programme outcomes, which are expressed in Framework terms (i.e. uses the appropriate Framework award-type descriptor with its eight sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence)

The Framework's level indicators are intended to provide the overarching reference point for the standard required of an award at a given level. Major awards at each level are further defined through major award-type descriptors incorporating sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence. Some progress is being made in higher education to translate these award-type descriptors into field specific indicators using the language of a particular discipline to provide a context for the elaboration of the descriptors.

In order for an award to be accurately included in the Framework, it should express its overall intended outcomes in terms of the appropriate knowledge, skill and competence associated with a particular Framework award-type, thus creating the programme learning outcomes. This ensures that there is a clear and transparent correlation between the programme, the appropriate Framework major award-type descriptor and the associated Framework level.

While the award-type descriptors have been designed as generic indicators of knowledge, skill and competence that apply regardless of the field of learning, these sub-strands will not necessarily be represented equally in the programme learning outcomes. This is matter for the programme designer and will very much depend on the nature of a given programme.

A major award that incorporates exit awards should express the learning outcomes for each of the programmes that it incorporates, as well as for the overall award, and these should be stated with reference to the related Framework award-type descriptors

Some major awards incorporate one or more exit awards that the learner can attain at a given point or points; other programmes are structured as ab initio awards. In terms of the former, examples would be an Honours Bachelor Degree that allows learners to choose to exit, upon appropriate assessment, with a Higher Certificate or an Ordinary Bachelor Degree. Equally a Master's Degree might incorporate a Postgraduate Diploma as an exit award.

In these cases, the awards incorporated into an overall award should be treated as part of the whole, but also in their own right. As a result, any award that it is possible to achieve must have its own overall programme outcomes articulated for it and these should be included in the programme document.

It is unlikely that all modules within a programme will incorporate all eight sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence

The level of knowledge, skill and competence associated with each individual module will not necessarily reflect the overall Framework level of the programme. For instance, an Honours Bachelor Degree in a given discipline may contain a substantial amount of level 6

and 7 outcomes. The guidelines set out by the NQAI indicate that for major awards, at least 60 credits associated with a programme should have learning outcomes at the level at which the programme as a whole is included in the Framework.

ASSIGNING CREDIT

The credit allocated to the modules and the programme as a whole should be compatible with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the national guidelines for the operation of credit

The higher education and training awards included in the Framework incorporate credit which is compatible with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The purpose of this is to contribute to the recognition and transparency of qualifications and the mobility of learners both nationally and internationally.

The allocation of credit to modules indicates the typical overall student workload associated with that module; in which case, the balance of emphasis on elements within the programme will need to be taken into consideration.

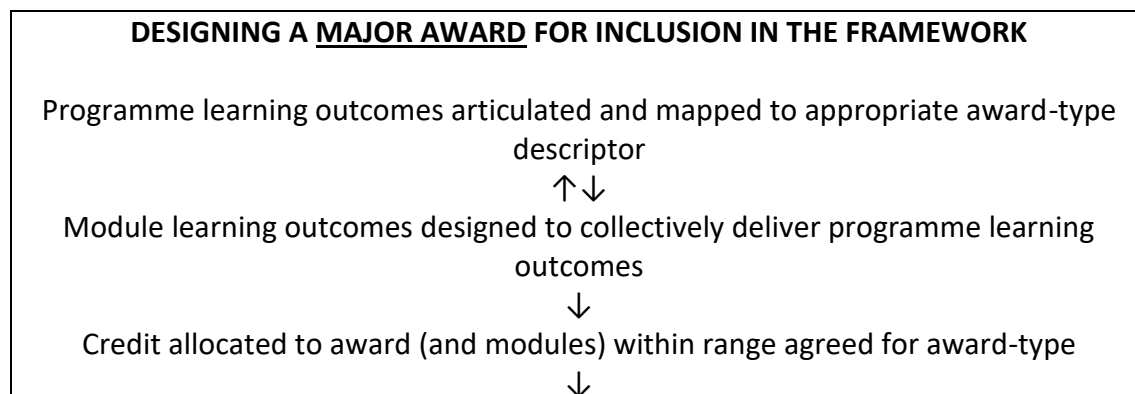
In the case of some awards there is a credit range in place; most notably the Honours Bachelor Degree has a range of 180 to 240 credits.

PROGRAMME/AWARD TITLES

The Major-Award type of a particular award should be reflected in the title of the award

In the case of major awards, programmes should make reference in their titles to the award-type they lead to i.e., Honours Bachelor Degree (in x), Higher Diploma (in y) etc. This is important in terms of clarity and transparency for the learner, other education and training institutions and the employer. Where local traditions prevail however, the learner and the public should at least be provided with clear and instructive information regarding the award's status in Framework terms, including the level, award-type, and associated credit and progression opportunities. The NQAI's short guide to marketing of Framework awards includes some examples of communicating the details of programmes included in the Framework.

NEW PROGRAMME GUIDELINES



Appropriate teaching, learning and assessment methodology designed



Name of award reflects appropriate award-type

DESIGNING A NON-MAJOR AWARD FOR INCLUSION IN THE FRAMEWORK

Programme learning outcomes articulated and mapped to appropriate Framework level



Learning outcomes for modules designed to collectively deliver programme learning outcomes



Credit allocated to award (and modules) within range agreed for award-type



Appropriate teaching, learning and assessment methodology designed



Award named in accordance with credit allocated

Module Learning Outcomes

DEVELOPING MODULE LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learning outcomes articulated for the modules that make up the programme should reflect and elaborate upon the programme learning outcomes.

Modules combine to make up a programme. Each one needs to be expressed in terms of learning outcomes and each should be contributing to the achievement of the overall programme learning outcomes. This construct lends an important coherence to a programme and provides the basis upon which effective and appropriate teaching and assessment can be based.

Extract from *Writing and Using Learning Outcomes: A Practical Guide* by Dr. Declan Kennedy, 2007

The following is a brief summary of the relevant guidelines. Readers are referred to Chapter 3 of the publication for more details. All academic staff have been circulated with a copy of the booklet. Copies of this handbook are available from NAIRTL (email: nairtl@ucc.ie).

Page 43:

The following guidelines may be of assistance when writing Learning Outcomes:

- Use a maximum of 9 learning outcomes per module (minimum of 3 learning outcomes per module)
- Use a bulleted list to describe the learning outcomes as per the examples provided.
- Begin each learning outcome with an active verb, followed by the object of the verb followed by a phrase that gives the context (see examples below).
- Use only one verb per learning outcome.
- Avoid vague terms like know, understand, learn, be familiar with, be exposed to, be acquainted with, and be aware of. As discussed in Chapter 2, these terms are associated with teaching objectives rather than learning outcomes.
- Avoid complicated sentences. If necessary use more than one sentence to ensure clarity.
- Ensure that the learning outcomes of the module relate to the overall outcomes of the programme.
- The learning outcomes must be observable and measurable.
- Ensure that the learning outcomes are capable of being assessed.
- When writing learning outcomes, bear in mind the timescale within which the outcomes are to be achieved. There is always the danger that one can be over ambitious when writing learning outcomes. Ask yourself if it is realistic to achieve the learning outcomes within the time and resources available.
- As you work on writing the learning outcomes, bear in mind how these outcomes will be assessed, i.e. how will you know if the student has achieved these learning outcomes? If the learning outcomes

are very broad, they may be difficult to assess effectively. If the learning outcomes are very narrow, the list of learning outcomes may be too long and detailed.

- Before finalising the learning outcomes, ask your colleagues and possibly former students if the learning outcomes make sense to them.
- When writing learning outcomes, try to avoid overloading the list with learning outcomes which are drawn from the bottom of Bloom’s Taxonomy (e.g. Knowledge and Comprehension in the cognitive domain). Try to challenge the students to use what they have learned by including some learning outcomes drawn from the higher categories (e.g. Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation) of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

It is standard practice when writing learning outcomes for a module, that the list of learning outcomes is usually preceded by a phrase like “On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:”

Additional Information

Learning outcomes need to be described clearly in order to fulfil their function. Lists of active verbs have been drawn up to assist in the process of writing learning outcomes. The list below is not designed to be exhaustive, but suggests some examples of active verbs that may serve to provide some assistance in getting started. The classifications are based on Bloom’s taxonomy but are not wholly categorical and so there is room for overlap and ambiguity. It is best to avoid using terms like “know” and “understand” where the student cannot reasonably be expected to know what amount of knowledge or what level of understanding is necessary. It is preferable to state in clear terms what a student should be able to do based on the knowledge, understanding and skills they are expected to develop.

Cognitive Domain

Knowledge	Arrange	Enumerate	Outline	Relate
	Collect	Examine	Present	Select
	Define	Identify	Recognise	State
	Describe	List	Record	Tabulate
	Draw	Order	Recount	Write

Comprehension	Associate	Defend	Explain	Predict
	Clarify	Describe	Extrapolate	Review
	Classify	Differentiate	Illustrate	Select
	Construct	Discuss	Infer	Solve
	Contrast	Distinguish	Interpret	Translate

Application	Apply	Construct	Illustrate	Organise
	Assess	Demonstrate	Interpret	Predict
	Calculate	Develop	Manipulate	Simulate
	Classify	Divide	Map	Solve
	Compute	Examine	Modify	Transfer

Analysis	Analyse	Compare	Develop	Inspect
	Appraise	Criticise	Differentiate	Investigate
	Arrange	Debate	Distinguish	Relate
	Categorise	Deduce	Examine	Simplify
	Classify	Determine	Group	Test

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Synthesis	Argue	Compose	Establish	Originate
	Arrange	Create	Formulate	Relate
	Assemble	Design	Generate	Revise
	Categorise	Develop	Integrate	Set up
	Compile	Devise	Prescribe	Synthesise

Evaluation	Appraise	Consider	Discriminate	Predict
	Ascertain	Criticise	Estimate	Resolve
	Argue	Critique	Evaluate	Select
	Assess	Defend	Interpret	Validate
	conclude	Determine	Justify	Verify

Affective Domain

Acknowledge	Co-operate	Justify	Resolve
Act	Defend	Listen	Respond
Adhere	Display	Participate	Share
Accept	Dispute	Praise	Support
Complete	Embrace	Question	Synthesise
Conform	Judge	Relate	Value

Psychomotor Domain

Adapt	Calibrate	Dismantle	Handle	Perform
Administer	Combine	Dissect	Manipulate	Present
Arrange	Construct	Examine	Measure	Sketch
Assemble	Design	Execute	Mime	Test
Build	Deliver	Fix	Operate	Use

The following is an example of learning outcomes written by Dr Edith Allen for UCC module RD3003

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Examine a patient extra-orally and intra-orally.
- Formulate an appropriate treatment plan based on an understanding of the disease process present and a prediction of the likely success.
- Identify dental caries and restore a tooth to functional form following caries removal.
- Record an accurate impression of the mouth and identify all anatomical features of importance.
- Design a partial denture with appropriate support and retention.
- Administer successfully and in a safe manner with minimal risk to patient and operator, infiltration and regional nerve block anaesthesia.
- Communicate with patients and colleagues in an appropriate manner.

The following is an example of learning outcomes written by Dr Shane Kilcommins for UCC module LW6545

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Differentiate between criminal law as paper rules and criminal law in action
- Outline and trace changes in punishment over time
- Identify the determinants which shape punishment in late modern society
- Employ different theoretical approaches to criminal law phenomena
- Examine the extent to which such theories can explain occurrences in late modern Irish society
- Interpret Irish criminal law cases, statutes and policy recommendations in socio-legal terms
- Connect changing values and sentiments in punishment with a changing emphasis on criminal law and procedure
- Assess current criminal justice policies in terms of direction and impact (as it relates to accused, victims, agencies and politicians)
- Question the extent to which criminal law really is objective and value free in orientation

Additional examples of module learning outcomes may be found in the booklet itself and on the QPU website at <http://www.ucc.ie/quality>. Copies of this handbook are available from NAIRTL (email: nairtl@ucc.ie)

See [here](#) for guidelines governing **Programme Learning Outcomes**

Policy for the Temporary Cessation of an Academic Programme

(Ref Academic Council 4th March 2016)

This procedure is distinct from the *Policy on Cessation of a Subject/Discipline at UCC* approved by AC on 21 June 2013. That policy provides for a pathway for the termination of a *subject area* within the university, while **this policy clarifies the conditions under which an academic programme can be “parked” temporarily**. Reasons why a College/School/Department may wish not to offer an academic programme could include temporary reduction in demand, absence of a key staff member through sabbatical or illness, or temporary lack of resources. This procedure will provide reassurance to Schools/Departments that they can **reactivate a programme without difficulty within three years**. **If the programme has been suspended for longer than three years, it must be resubmitted for re-approval in accordance with the process governing new programme approval ([here](#))**.

Temporary Suspension of an Academic Programme (non-CAO and Postgraduate)

1. Introduction and Context

This procedure provides for a mechanism whereby non-CAO and postgraduate programmes can be suspended for a limited period of time, rather than being deleted completely from the university’s list of programme offerings.

Note: Where the intention is to suspend or remove an **Undergraduate** programme recruited through the CAO (or a subject included in a programme listed in the CAO handbook) the proposer should contact the Admissions Officer (Jennifer.Murphy@ucc.ie) and the Head of Academic Programmes and Regulations (e.fouhy@ucc.ie) in the first instance. Where the intention is to suspend or remove a **Postgraduate** programme recruited through PAC the programme coordinator should contact the Graduate Studies Office to indicate this in the first instance.

2. Request for Temporary Withdrawal of a Programme

A request to temporarily suspend a **non-CAO or postgraduate programme** may emanate from the Head of College, or the Head of School, or the Chair of the relevant Board of Studies.

3. Procedure for Temporary Suspension

Taking cognizance of external accreditation (if any) and following discussion and sign-off by (a) a person nominated for this purpose by the relevant college council (e.g., vice-head of college with responsibility for curriculum matters or chair of the college curriculum committee) **and** (b) the college financial analyst, a request to temporarily suspend a programme shall be referred to the relevant college executive for final approval. The relevant college office will inform the Office for Academic Programmes and Regulations (APAR) who in turn will notify the relevant impacted offices e.g. Graduate Studies Office, Admissions Office, International Office, Student Records and Examinations and Systems Administration. In the case of programmes accredited by any external accrediting body, it will be the responsibility of the Lead College to notify the relevant accreditation body of the suspension.

A programme may be temporarily suspended for up to three years, following which it will either be (a) removed permanently from the list of programmes on offer by the university, (b) held in abeyance for longer with the approval of the College Executive or (c) re-introduced. In the case of (c) this must

follow the process governing new programme approval (i.e. Outline Programme Approval by Academic Board, followed by full programme approval by the relevant approval panel ([here](#)). A re-introduced programme should not be put into abeyance again under this policy for a period of three years.

The college office will notify APAR to activate the programme in advance of the opening up of recruitment for the following academic year (i.e. PAC roll-over in November). In the absence of this notification the programme listing for each subsequent year up to a total of three years will note that the programme is not on offer. Following the three-year suspension period, the college should advise APAR of the status of the programme going forward in accordance with the process outlined in the preceding paragraph.

3. University Calendar, Book of Modules and Prospectus

3.1 University Calendar and Book Modules

APAR will note the suspension of the programme in the University Calendar (e.g. not on offer for 2017/18). The programme description will be retained in the Calendar; modules descriptions will be retained on DMIS but not published in the Book of Modules unless offered on other active programmes.

3.1 Postgraduate Prospectus

If the suspension is approved in advance of PAC roll over the programme will be removed from the postgraduate prospectus. If approval occurs after recruitment has opened for the next student intake, it will be noted on the prospectus that the programme is not accepting applications. The lead academic unit will be responsible for informing the applicants that the programme will not run and for refunding the PAC application fee to any applicants who applied in advance of suspension of the programme.

3.2 Undergraduate Prospectus (non-CAO/local recruitment)

For non-CAO, locally recruited programmes, APAR will notify the Admissions Office who will remove the programme from the undergraduate prospectus (publication of the prospectus occurs 18 months in advance of student intake). Suspension of programmes after publication of the prospectus will be noted on the study@ucc website.

4. Adult Continuing Education Programmes

The temporary suspension and re-activation of Adult Continuing Education (ACE) programmes will be administered by ACE in accordance with this policy.

Policy on Designing, Delivering & Assessing Group Work

(Ref Academic Board 5th April 2017)

Introduction

[1] This policy is built around a set of general principles governing the design, delivery and assessment of group work. It applies to all modules, including those delivered via online / blended learning, involving group work as defined in section 4 below. In addition to these general principles, a checklist is included in Appendix 1. The checklist is intended to support good practice in the delivery of group work. It is designed to facilitate both ongoing review of existing elements of group work and development of new group work-based activities. A Resource List on group work is included in Appendix 2. The intention is that roll out of the policy would be supported by a series of seminars / workshops on group work and related matters organised at both central University and local level.

[2] Alignment between forms of assessment and intended learning outcomes is considered to be good educational practice which supports high quality student learning. As a method of assessment, group work shares the same requirements as all other forms of assessment for educational alignment. This includes the need for a clear statement of the learning to be assessed, the assessment task, assessment criteria, and expectations for levels of student performance. Group work can facilitate the development and / or assessment of learners' valuable transferrable skills, including communication, problem-solving and team-working abilities. Nevertheless, some staff and students may regard assessment of group work activities with a degree of apprehension, which often arises as group work is typically a less frequently used form of assessment and therefore less well understood than other assessment methods such as examination. This document aims to promote good practice in group work activities through a set of general principles which are sufficiently robust to reflect good practice in the design and practice of assessment and flexible enough to be permissive of the range of disciplinary settings and approaches in operation across the university.

[3] It is important to acknowledge at the outset that there is currently no overarching policy or code of practice on assessment at UCC. This state of affairs makes it challenging to develop principles governing one particular method of assessment in isolation. In the absence of an overarching policy on assessment, this document aims to promote good practice through a set of general principles so that students undertaking group work activity are not disadvantaged.

General definition of “group work”

[4] For the purpose of this policy, “group work” involves students working collaboratively on a particular project, assignment or task and where the assessment is based on the output of the group work and / or the group work process (i.e. assessment of participation in the group). There are different kinds of assessment that may be used in a particular case. Module co-ordinators should consider carefully whether group work assessment is continuous, formative and / or summative.

Background and context

[5] A wide range of group work activity takes place across the University and provides valuable learning opportunities for students. As well as strengthening students' capacity with respect to rigorous scholarship, group work facilitates the development of a range of transferable skills which are much sought after by employers (e.g. leadership skills, problem-solving skills, working as part of a team, time management, communication skills, presentation and report writing skills, self-reflection

etc.). The use of group work, and the emphasis on developing an active, student-centred learning environment through problem-based and project-based learning, has increased in recent years. This trend is likely to continue into the future with the strong contemporary focus on “work ready” graduates who have acquired a wide range of skills in the course of their programme of study.

[6] Given the diversity of approaches to group work across the University, and the specific disciplinary and / or professional accreditation requirements that apply in certain cases, setting down a core set of general principles, to be supplemented by best practice in each particular discipline, is the best approach.

[7] The overarching objective of this policy is to commend best practice and positive learning outcomes which aim to ensure, *inter alia*, that an individual student’s contribution to group work is accurately assessed and rewarded. This objective is best achieved by careful attention at the outset to the design and delivery of group work activities including putting appropriate processes in place to address any issues, tensions or disputes that might arise in the course of a group work activity and communicating this information effectively to students.

General principles on group work

1. Clear module objectives and learning outcomes communicated effectively to students

The Policy Governing Modules (including the Academic Council approved module guidelines and checklist) can be found in the DMIS guidelines ([here](#)). As is the case for every module, the module description in the Book of Modules must state the objectives and learning outcomes of any module involving group work.

The published Book of Modules is the contract between the University and the student and should accurately reflect the module which is delivered. Additional information which expands on the approved published module description should also be made available directly to students, preferably in writing, in an initial briefing session or introductory seminar (and / or via Blackboard). In some cases, a student handbook may be provided which contains information with regard to group work activities. Any additional information must be aligned with the approved module description as published in the Book of Modules.

Carefully considered, well-designed module objectives and robust learning outcomes, which are communicated effectively to students, should reduce the scope for potential problems in implementation and assessment of group work.

The module objectives and learning outcomes will guide the choice of learning method(s) and the most appropriate method(s) of assessment.

2. Clear statement of assessment method(s) communicated effectively to students

The module description in the Book of Modules must state how the module will be assessed and the specific weighting assigned to each element of the overall assessment. In particular, students must be informed as to whether assessment is based on their individual performance or the group's performance or a combination of both.

In order to ensure fairness, and to reflect accurately each individual student's contribution to a group work project, it is highly recommended that any assessment of group work activity should involve a specific mechanism whereby *individual* student achievement is recognised and rewarded. Assessment of group work should therefore involve two elements: one comprising a group mark and the other comprising an individual mark (see further point 6 in the checklist in the Appendix where further detail is provided on this point).

The rationale for each element of the overall assessment and how this links into the learning outcomes and / or accreditation requirements / professional requirements (where appropriate) should be clear to all students. For example, what skills are being assessed in performing a particular task (e.g. presentation skills, report writing skills etc.)?

Students must be provided with clear expectations at the outset of the module, as well as clear information, in writing, detailing how their performance and contribution to any group work activity will be assessed. This information must describe each element of the overall assessment for the module, the weighting assigned to it and the evaluation criteria and must be consistent with the approved module description as published in the Book of Modules. Any change to the published Book of Modules must be approved at College level before being communicated to students.

Particular care needs to be taken where group work accounts for a significant portion of the marks available in a specific module and / or programme.

When determining the assessment method(s) and the weight to be assigned to each element of the overall assessment, careful consideration must be given to the distribution of marks for

each element of the assessment so as to reflect the nature and complexity of the particular task(s) assigned to the individual and /or group.

Where marks are allocated to students for their own specific contribution to a piece of work undertaken in a group, clear guidance must be provided to students at the outset of the module on how to distinguish their particular individual contribution to the piece of work in question (e.g. each student may be required to submit a declaration (or equivalent) confirming their particular contribution to a group work project).

Students must be provided with the information necessary to enable them to understand clearly how each element of assessment will be graded (e.g. grade descriptors or evaluation criteria).

Overall responsibility and oversight for grading must rest with the module co-ordinator to ensure consistency.

Arrangements for supplemental examinations involving group work must be set out in the module description in the Book of Modules and must comply with Academic Council approved policy in relation to repeating Continuous Assessment for Supplemental Examinations ([see DMIS Guidelines](#)). This policy states that, wherever practicable, a second opportunity should be provided to students who have failed Continuous Assessment, or particular elements of Continuous Assessment. These arrangements must be considered carefully and communicated clearly to students in good time. Arrangements for supplemental examinations allow that the format of the second opportunity examination in Continuous Assessment need not necessarily be the same as that used for in-year assessment but, whatever format is used, the same competencies should be assessed and should ensure that the module learning outcomes are evaluated, and that the format is appropriate for return of marks.

3. Clarity around how groups are formed

Groups in the context of this policy are considered to consist of two or more students working jointly on a particular project, assignment or task. Group size should reflect the nature and complexity of the learning outcomes and the specific task(s) assigned to the group. Students must take responsibility for contributing to the group dynamic and making it work.

Students must be informed at the outset as to how groups will be formed. It is recognised that, in some cases, self-selection may be appropriate while, in others, students may not have a choice in their allocation to a group; the merits and appropriateness of the two approaches should be considered carefully for each group work assignment. If self-selection is used, it must be co-ordinated through the module co-ordinator rather than being left to the students' own devices.

4. Timely and informative feedback for students

In order to enable students to judge their progress and improve their performance over the course of the module, timely and informative feedback should be provided for each element of the assessment where possible.

5. Opportunities for students to comment on experience in the group

An appropriate process must be put in place to enable students to communicate their experiences of how the group is progressing to the lecturer and / or module co-ordinator (as appropriate) on an ongoing basis. Such a process provides an “early warning system” which can alert the lecturer / module co-ordinator to any potential issues or problems within a group at an early stage.

6. Processes to address any issues / conflicts arising during a group work project

Module co-ordinators should encourage members of a group to attempt to resolve any conflicts that arise among themselves in the first instance, where appropriate.

A suitable dispute resolution process must be put in place at the outset and students must be informed as to how they can engage this process should the need arise. At the very minimum, students must be informed of their entitlement to contact the lecturer and / or module co-ordinator (as appropriate) for assistance. The importance of addressing any issues arising at the earliest possible opportunity must be communicated clearly to students. The nature of the process put in place will vary depending on the nature of the group work activity in question and the weighting assigned to it (for example, where group work accounts for a significant portion of the marks available in a specific module and / or programme, a more formal and elaborate dispute resolution process may be necessary). The University is currently in the process of developing a Student Complaints Policy. Once this policy is in place, local dispute resolution processes should be aligned with its requirements.

7. Feedback mechanism on student experience of the module

As is the case with any module, with a view towards ongoing improvement of the module and learning from experience, students should be given an appropriate opportunity to provide feedback on their experience of the module and, in particular, on the group work element, to the module co-ordinator.

8. Support and collaboration among staff involved in group work activities

Staff members who are proposing new modules that involve group work, or who are considering introducing a group work component to existing modules, should be encouraged to engage with more experienced colleagues at the outset so that they are made aware of any potential pit-falls and how best to avoid problems with implementation.

9. Relevant policies, Codes of Conduct etc.

Due attention and consideration must be given to UCC policies, codes of conduct etc. that may be relevant in a particular situation, including, for example, the [Handbook Governing Curriculum Approval](#), the [Policies and Guidelines Governing Academic Programmes](#), [DMIS Guidelines](#), the Guide to Examinations for Staff and Students, the Plagiarism Policy, the Duty of Respect and Right to Dignity Policy, and the UCC Student Rules etc.

10. Review

This policy will be subject to review by the Academic Council Teaching and Learning Committee after its first year in operation.

Appendix 1

Designing, Delivering and Assessing Group Work Checklist

This checklist is intended to support good practice in the delivery of group work. It is designed to facilitate both ongoing review of existing elements of group work and development of new group work-based activities. In such cases, it is recommended that the following questions be considered carefully:

1. Is group work an appropriate form of assessment for the particular module (whether as part of the assessment for the module or as the sole form of assessment for the module)? What is the rationale behind using group work as a form of assessment in the module?

2. What learning outcomes are being assessed?

These may be specific to group work:

- Understanding of participative roles and responsibilities
- Leadership and organisational skills
- Working in a multidisciplinary or multi-cultural environment
- Conflict management

and generic in project work:

- The ability to conduct research
- Report writing skills
- Presentation skills
- Project management (time and asset management)
- Problem solving

3. What is the appropriate group size?

- Group of 2 (where a co-operative model with equal division of work is optimal)
- Group of 3-4 (requiring division of workload/self-identification of strengths and weaknesses and optimisation of roles and responsibilities)
- Group of > 5 (for larger projects with more tasks or greater complexity - or where sub-groups may be involved - and requiring detailed protocols for assignment of roles and responsibilities)

4. How are groups assigned (examples might include self-assembly by students, random allocation, alphabetical groupings, groupings assigned by the lecturer etc.)?

5. Are there opportunities for multidisciplinary groups and/or culturally diverse groups (i.e. are there factors which are imposed onto the formation of groups to ensure a particular mix of disciplines or groups)?

6. How will the input of members of the group be assessed? Is there potential for students to complete the module without contributing significant effort?

- What is the breakdown of marks between each element of the overall assessment for the module, including any group work activity?

- What proportion of the overall marks available for the group work activity are assigned to: (1) an individual student's performance in the group work activity and (2) the group's performance?
 - How are individual student's specific contributions to group work activity to be recognised and rewarded (e.g. by requiring each student to submit a declaration confirming their particular contribution to the group work project)?
 - Is peer assessment of individual student performance in the group setting to be used?
 - How is it ensured that sufficient weight is attached to individual contributions to the group effort?
 - How is it ensured that no student is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged in the group setting?
 - How will students receive feedback on their performance as individuals and as groups?
 - At what particular points in the module will students receive feedback on their performance?
 - What opportunities will be afforded to students to apply the feedback received to improve their performance?
 - How is student feedback on the conduct and assessment of the group work elements of the module gathered and used (i.e. what arrangements are in place to ensure that the feedback loop is closed)?
7. Are group/team roles and responsibilities assigned or brokered internally in each group/team?
- Who is the group/team leader? How is the group/team leader selected? What delegated authority do they have?
 - How is equitable distribution of workload ensured?
8. What process(es) are in place to address any issues or conflicts that may arise in the course of the group work activity? How are any student complaints/concerns to be handled?
9. How is the success or otherwise of the group work activity as a learning tool assessed?
- Are you measuring the achievement of learning outcomes?
 - To what programme learning outcomes do the specific module learning outcomes relate?
- What evidence of student attainment of learning outcomes is preserved for professional accreditation (if appropriate)?
10. Are students prepared for further study / accreditation, e.g., will students completing programmes with modules heavily weighted towards continuous assessment be prepared adequately if required to sit written examinations by professional bodies?

Appendix 2 Designing, Delivering and Assessing Group Work Resource List

This annotated resource list provides some sign-posts to practices, policies and practice research about the use of group work within the higher education curriculum.

Institutional Resources / Guides

1. Carnegie Mellon University, Eberly Center supports innovative educational practice and some of its learning resources deal with group work: “*What are best practices for designing group projects?*” outlines three important aspects of designing group work: creating interdependence, developing team skills and individual contribution.

The resource can be accessed here:

<http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/instructionalstrategies/groupprojects/design.html>

“*Assessing groupwork*” sets out some key principles for assessment in this context and some assessment tools for groups and self-assessment, as well as grading methods.

The resource can be accessed here:

<http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/howto/assesslearning/groupWork.html>

2. Higher Education Academy provides a range of resources and publications based on commissioned research and case studies by academic staff.

Some resources available include:

https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/feature_janey_gordon.pdf

This case study summarises the results of a project which examined group work activities undertaken within a selection of HE programmes, in particular the ways that lecturers can aid the enhancement of the work within that group.

<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resource/peer-moderation-group-work-hands-workshop>

This presentation provides an overview of WebPA, an open source online peer assessment tool that enables every team member to recognise individual contributions to group work that was created by JISC.

3. Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development offers consultancy, courses and other support for staff and educational development nationally and internationally, within higher education and the public sector, and internally at Oxford Brookes University. Resources on group work include principles to guide group work activities as well as practical examples.

<http://owww.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocslid/resources/groupwork/index.html>

4. O Neill, Geraldine, M. (2013) *Assessing Group Work (including online)*
<http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCDTLE0065.pdf>

This resource addresses a range of approaches to assessing group work including questions of the focus of assessment, the methods of assessment and emphasis whether on the process of group work or the product of groups or both.