

Levels and Awards Framework

[TQA Manual - Introduction and Contents](#)

[Implementation: for students entering University programmes (including those validated at partner institutions) from October 2003]

This document sets the framework for levels and awards under which programmes leading to a qualification of the University of Exeter, including those validated at partner institutions, should operate. The document comprises five parts:

Part A: [Award Levels](#)

Part B: [Awards Framework](#)

Part C: [Qualification Descriptors](#)

Part D: [Credit Levels and Descriptors](#)

Part E: [General Principles and Notes](#)

Note: Qualification descriptors are quite distinct from credit level descriptors. The former relate to whole qualifications and encompass all qualifications at a particular award level. Credit level descriptors, on the other hand, are used to locate the level of a module and to inform the definition of learning outcomes and assessment criteria at the specific level. In summary, credit level descriptors are essentially aids to curriculum development while qualification descriptors are aids to the quality assurance of programmes and terminal qualifications.

1 PART A: AWARD LEVELS

1.1 The University has adopted six levels for its awards to mirror those in the framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ) published by the Quality Assurance Agency, viz.:

Within each level, the various qualifications involve different volumes of learning and hence differences in the range of intended learning outcomes.

Typical higher education qualifications within each level	FHEQ level*	Corresponding FQ-EHEA cycle
Doctoral degrees (eg PhD/DPhil (including new-route PhD), EdD, DBA, DClinPsy)**	8	Third cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Master's degree (eg MPhil, MLitt, MRes, MA, MSc)	7	Second cycle (end of cycle) qualifications
Integrated master's degrees (eg MEng, MChem, MPhys, MPharm)***		
Postgraduate diplomas		
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)****		
Postgraduate certificates	6	First cycle
Bachelor's degrees with honours (eg BA/ BSc Hons)		

Bachelor's degrees		(end of cycle) qualifications
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)		
Graduate diplomas		
Graduate certificates		
Foundation degree (eg FdA, FdSc)	5	Short cycle (within or linked to the first cycle) qualifications
Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)		
Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)	4	
Introductory Certificate	3	

Notes:

* Formerly, in the 2001 edition of the FHEQ, the levels were identified as Certificate (C), Intermediate (I), Honours (H), Masters (M) and Doctoral (D) level.

** Professional doctorate programmes include some taught elements in addition to the research dissertation. Practice varies but typically professional doctorates include postgraduate study equivalent to a minimum of three full-time calendar years with level 7 study representing no more than one-third of this.

*** Integrated master's degree programmes typically include study equivalent to at least four full-time academic years, of which study equivalent to at least one full-time academic year is at level 7. Thus study at bachelor's level is integrated with study at master's level and the programmes are designed to meet the level 6 and level 7 qualification descriptors in full.

2 PART B: AWARDS FRAMEWORK

University awards shall be dependent on the successful achievement of programmes which will comply with the following structure:

2.1 Undergraduate Provision

- (a) Introductory Certificate: At least 120 credits at level 0 or higher
- (b) Certificate of Higher Education: At least 120 credits of which 90 or more must be at level 1
- (c) Diploma of Higher Education: At least 240 credits of which 90 or more must be at level 1 and 90 or more must be at level 2 or above
- (d) Foundation Degrees: At least 240 credits of which 90 or more must be at level 2 or above
- (e) Graduate Certificate: At least 120 credits of which 90 or more must be at level 3
- (f) Ordinary Degree¹: At least 300 credits including not more than 150 at level 1 and at least 60 at level 3

At least 420 credits for a four stage programme including not more than 150 at level 1 and at least 120 at level 3, except in four stage programmes with the

second year abroad where there should be not more than 150 credits at level 1 and at least 60 at level 3.

(g) Honours Degree (three-year full-time equivalent): At least 360 credits including not more than 150 at level 1 and at least 90 at level 3

(h) Honours Degree (four-year full-time equivalent):

Languages/European Study/Sandwich: At least 480 credits including not more than 150 at level 1 and at least 90 at level 3

Education: At least 480 credits including not more than 150 at level 1 and at least 180 at level 3

MEng/MChem/MMath/MPhys: 480 credits including not more than 150 at level 1 and at least 180 credits at level 3 or higher of which at least 90 must be at level M

(i) Flexible Combined Honours Degree:

Ordinary: At least 300 credits including not more than 180 at level 1 and at least 60 at level 3

Honours (three-year full-time equivalent): At least 360 credits including not more than 180 at level 1 and at least 90 at level 3

Honours (four-year full-time equivalent): At least 480 credits including not more than 180 at level 1 and at least 90 at level 3

(j) BA Law: At least 120 credits at level 3

(k) Diploma in Law: At least 120 credits at level 3

(l) Professional Graduate Certificate in Education: At least 120 credits at level 3

(m) Graduate LLB: At least 240 credits, including not more than 150 at level 2 and at least 90 at level 3.

2.2 Postgraduate Provision

(a) Postgraduate Certificate: At least 60 credits of which 45 or more must be at level M

(b) Postgraduate Certificate in Education: At least 120 credits of which 60 credits must be at level M

(c) Postgraduate Diploma: At least 120 credits of which 90 or more must be at level M

(d) Diploma in Legal Practice: At least 120 credits of which 90 or more must be at level M

- (e) Taught Masters²: At least 180 credits of which 150 or more must be at level M
- (f) Professional Doctorates: At least 540 credits of which 360 must be at level D
- (g) MFA: At least 260 credits of which 300 must be at M level.

3 PART C: QUALIFICATION DESCRIPTORS

- 3.1 In support of the approved levels and their applicability to the award framework outlined in Part A, qualification descriptors have been adopted as shown below. These are in line with the QQA Academic Infrastructure 2008.

They indicate the principal outcomes that a student should be able to demonstrate following the completion of an award at a designated level. Those designing or reviewing programmes of study for an award will need to assure themselves that the educational aims, curricula, programme outcomes and other elements of the programme are appropriate to the descriptors for the qualification to which the programme is intended to lead. Further information or advice can be obtained from the Faculty Office or the Educational Enhancement Unit.

3.2 *Descriptors for Level 3: Introductory Certificate*

Students successfully completing programme requirements at level 3 will have demonstrated:

- (a) that they have a knowledge base of given and probably limited conceptual and factual knowledge with some appreciation of the field of study and of terminology used;
- (b) an ability to work with that knowledge (analyse, synthesise, evaluate and apply) independently in relatively simple contexts or with guidance when working with greater complexity.

Typically, successful students will be able to:

- within limits of knowledge, demonstrate awareness of the role of evaluation and can, with developing ability, evaluate the reliability of data under guidance and using defined techniques;
- communicate in an increasingly effective manner in a format appropriate to the discipline; there is progress towards clear reporting of practical procedures;
- manage relatively simple information, collect data from a range of straightforward sources and take responsibility for own learning with appropriate support; can recognise the need for further learning as necessary;
- demonstrate qualities and transferable skills required for employment in circumstances where there is exercise of some personal responsibility.

3.3 *Descriptors for Level 4: Certificate of Higher Education*

Students successfully completing programme requirements at level 4 will have demonstrated:

- (a) knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their areas of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study;
- (b) an ability to present, evaluate, and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.

Typically, successful students at this level will be able to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work;
- communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments;
- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment; and will have
- qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

3.4 *Descriptors for Level 5: Foundation Degree*

Students successfully completing programme requirements at level 5 will have demonstrated:

- (a) knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed;
- (b) ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context;
- (c) knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subject(s), and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study;
- (d) an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

Typically, successful students at this level will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis;
- effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis, in a variety of forms, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively;
- undertake further training, develop existing skills, and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations; and will have
- qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

3.5 *Descriptors for Level 6: Bachelor's degree with honours*

Students successfully completing programme requirements at level 6 will have demonstrated:

- (a) a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline;
- (b) an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline;
- (c) conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline; and
 - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline;
- (d) an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge;
- (e) the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary resources (e.g. refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).

Typically, successful students at this level will be able to:

- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects;
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – or identify a range of solutions – to a problem;
- communicate information, ideas, problems, and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences; and will have
- qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts; and
 - the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

3.6 *Descriptors for Level 7: Master's degree*

Students successfully completing programme requirements at level 7 will have demonstrated:

- (a) a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- (b) a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;

- (c) originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- (d) conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, successful students at this level will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level; and will have
- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

3.7 *Descriptors for Level 8: Doctoral Degree*

Students successfully completing programme requirements at level 8 will have demonstrated:

- (a) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- (b) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- (c) the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- (d) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, successful students at this level will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;

- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches; and will have
- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

4 PART D: CREDIT LEVELS AND DESCRIPTORS

- 4.1 Credit levels are indicators of the level of complexity, relative demand and autonomy expected of a learner on completion of a component of a programme of study.
- 4.2 Credit levels provide a description of levels of learning through a hierarchy of knowledge and skills that begins with the basic knowledge and skills required in higher education, to the very highest level of learning found in postgraduate work. They describe the characteristics and context of learning expected at each level, against which specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria can be derived in order to develop modules of study and assign credit for achievement of learning at the appropriate level.
- 4.3 Credit levels, in effect, provide descriptive building blocks for awards. They will most commonly be used in the context of module descriptions, reflected cumulatively in the credit requirements for awards detailed in Part D.
- 4.4 The University has adopted six HE levels for use in its credit framework:

Undergraduate	0 1 2 3
Undergraduate (enhanced)/Postgraduate	M
Postgraduate	TD ³

- 4.5 Each of these levels has been assigned a set of descriptors, the principal uses of which are as follows:
- (a) for assistance in curriculum design
 - (b) to guide the assignment of credit
 - (c) to provide guidelines for programme approval
 - (d) to provide guidelines for recognition of the level of learning from experience in non-formal settings
 - (e) for the purposes of staff development

4.6 In interpreting the credit level descriptors, the following guidelines are suggested:

- In general, progression between levels is characterised by two important related factors –
 - the **autonomy** of the learner
 - the increasing **responsibility** that is expected of the learner in the guidance given and the tasks set
- Some or all of the following skills will be identified by subject specialists at any level. It may be useful for subject specialists to develop more detailed descriptors of these skills in association with the other level descriptors in order to determine achievement at each level.
 - (a) Investigative skills/methods of enquiry;
 - (b) Laboratory skills/fieldcraft;
 - (c) Data and information processing/IT;
 - (d) Content/textual analysis;
 - (e) Performance skills;
 - (f) Product development;
 - (g) Professional skills;
 - (h) Spatial awareness;
 - (i) Management of resources.

4.7 The credit level descriptors are detailed on the following pages. They are drawn principally from descriptors published in 2002 by the Southern England Consortium for Credit (SEEC).

HE LEVEL 0

Development of Knowledge and Understanding

The Learner:

- **Knowledge base:** has a given, possibly uneven/limited factual/conceptual knowledge base; has an appreciation of the field of study/terminology
- **Ethical issues:** has some awareness of the ethical issues in the main areas of study; is developing the ability to discuss these in relation to personal beliefs and values.

Cognitive/Intellectual Skills

The Learner:

- **Analysis:** within limits, can demonstrate developing ability to analyse with guidance, using given classifying principles.
- **Synthesis:** within limits of knowledge, can assemble ideas and information in a predictable and standard, possibly given format.

- **Evaluation:** within limits of knowledge, is aware of the issue of evaluation; demonstrates developing ability to evaluate the reliability of data using defined techniques and/or guidance.
- **Application:** can apply given tools/methods to a well defined problem and can begin to appreciate the complexity of the issues

Key/Transferable Skills

The Learner:

- **Group working:** meets obligations to others (tutors/peers); shows recognition of the effects of groups on own and others' behaviour
- **Learning resources:** is gaining in confidence in use and access to a range of learning resources
- **Self evaluation:** is developing the ability to evaluate own strengths and weakness within criteria largely set by others
- **Management of information:** within a defined context, can manage information, collect data from a range of straightforward sources and is gaining in confidence to undertake simple research tasks with external guidance.
- **Autonomy:** can take responsibility for much/most of own learning with appropriate support.
- **Communications:** is developing ability to communicate effectively in a format appropriate to the discipline(s) and there is evidence of progress towards reporting practical procedures in a clear and concise manner
- **Problem solving:** can apply given tools/methods to a well-defined problem and shows beginning recognition of the complexity of associated issues.

Practical Skills

The Learner:

- **Application:** can operate in predictable, defined contexts that require use of a specified range of standard techniques
- **Autonomy in skill use:** is able to act with limited autonomy, under direction or supervision, within defined guidelines

HE LEVEL 1

Development of Knowledge and Understanding

The Learner:

- **Knowledge base:** has a given factual and/or conceptual knowledge base with emphasis on the nature of the field of study and appropriate terminology;
- **Ethical issues:** can demonstrate awareness of ethical issues in current areas of study and is able to discuss these in relation to personal beliefs and values.

Cognitive/Intellectual Skills

The Learner:

- **Analysis:** can analyse with guidance using given classifications/principles
- **Synthesis:** can collect and categorise ideas and information in a predictable and standard format
- **Evaluation:** can evaluate the reliability of data using defined techniques and/or tutor guidance
- **Application:** can apply given tools/methods accurately and carefully to a well defined problem and begin to appreciate the complexity of the issues

Key/Transferable Skills

The Learner:

- **Group working:** can work effectively with others as a member of a group and meet obligations to others (for example, tutors, peers, and colleagues)
- **Learning resources:** can work within an appropriate ethos and can use and access a range of learning resources
- **Self evaluation:** can evaluate own strengths and weakness within criteria largely set by others
- **Management of information:** can manage information, collect appropriate data from a range of sources and undertake simple research tasks with external guidance
- **Autonomy:** can take responsibility for own learning with appropriate support
- **Communications:** can communicate effectively in a format appropriate to the discipline(s) and report practical procedures in a clear and concise manner
- **Problem solving:** can apply given tools/methods accurately and carefully to a well defined problem and begins to appreciate the complexity of the issues in the discipline

Practical Skills

The Learner:

- **Application:** can operate in predictable, defined contexts that require use of a specified range of standard techniques
- **Autonomy in skill use:** is able to act with limited autonomy, under direction or supervision, within defined guidelines

HE LEVEL 2

Development of Knowledge and Understanding

The Learner:

- **Knowledge base:** has a detailed knowledge of major theories of the discipline(s) and an awareness of a variety of ideas, contexts and frameworks
- **Ethical issues:** is aware of the wider social and environmental implications of area(s) of study and is able to debate issues in relation to more general ethical perspectives

Cognitive/Intellectual Skills

The Learner:

- **Analysis:** can analyse a range of information with minimum guidance using given classifications/principles and can compare alternative methods and techniques for obtaining data
- **Synthesis:** can reformat a range of ideas and information towards a given purpose
- **Evaluation:** can select appropriate techniques of evaluation and can evaluate the relevance and significance of the data collected
- **Application:** can identify key elements of problems and choose appropriate methods for their resolution in a considered manner

Key/Transferable Skills

The Learner:

- **Group working:** can interact effectively within a team/learning group, giving and receiving information and ideas and modifying responses where appropriate
- **Learning resources:** can manage learning using resources for the discipline; can develop working relationships of a professional nature within the discipline(s)

- **Self evaluation:** can evaluate own strengths and weakness, challenge received opinion and develop own criteria and judgement
- **Management of information:** can manage information; can select appropriate data from a range of sources and develop appropriate research strategies
- **Autonomy:** can take responsibility for own learning with minimum direction
- **Communications:** can communicate effectively in a manner appropriate to the discipline(s) and report practical procedures in a clear and concise manner in a variety of formats
- **Problem-solving:** can identify key areas of problems and choose appropriate tools/methods for their resolution in a considered manner

Practical Skills

The Learner:

- **Application of skills:** can operate in situations of varying complexity and predictability requiring application of a wide range of techniques
- **Autonomy in skill use:** is able to act with increasing autonomy, with reduced need for supervision and direction, within defined guidelines

HE LEVEL 3

Development of Knowledge and Understanding

The Learner:

- **Knowledge base:** has a comprehensive/detailed knowledge of a major discipline(s), with areas of specialisation in depth, and an awareness of the provisional nature of knowledge
- **Ethical issues:** is aware of personal responsibility and professional codes of conduct and can incorporate a critical ethical dimension into a major piece of work

Cognitive/Intellectual Skills

The Learner:

- **Analysis:** can analyse new and/or abstract data and situations without guidance, using a range of techniques appropriate to the subject
- **Synthesis:** with minimum guidance can transform abstract data and concepts towards a given purpose and can design novel solutions
- **Evaluation:** can critically evaluate evidence to support conclusions/recommendations, reviewing its reliability, validity and significance; can investigate contradictory information/identify reasons for contradictions
- **Application:** is confident and flexible in identifying and defining complex problems and can apply appropriate knowledge and skills to their solution

Key/Transferable Skills

The Learner:

- **Group working:** can interact effectively within a team/learning/professional group, recognise, support or be proactive in leadership, negotiate in a professional context and manage conflict
- **Learning resources:** with minimum guidance can manage own learning using full range of resources for the discipline(s); can work professionally within the discipline
- **Self evaluation:** is confident in application of own criteria of judgement and can challenge received opinion and reflect on action; can seek and make use of feedback

- **Information management:** can select and manage information, competently undertake reasonably straight-forward research tasks with minimum guidance
- **Autonomy:** can take responsibility for own work and can criticise it
- **Communications:** can engage effectively in debate in a professional manner and produce detailed and coherent project reports
- **Problem solving:** is confident and flexible in identifying and defining complex problems and the application of appropriate knowledge, tools/methods to their solution

Practical Skills

The Learner:

- **Application of skills:** can operate in complex and unpredictable contexts, requiring selection and application from a wide range of innovative or standard techniques
- **Autonomy in skill use:** is able to act autonomously, with minimal supervision or direction, within agreed guidelines

HE LEVEL M

Development of Knowledge and Understanding

The Learner:

- **Knowledge base:** has depth and systematic understanding of knowledge in specialised/ applied areas and/ across areas and can work with theoretical/research-based knowledge at the forefront of their academic discipline
- **Ethical issues:** has the awareness and ability to manage the implications of ethical dilemmas and work pro-actively with others to formulate solutions
- **Disciplinary methodologies:** has a comprehensive understanding of techniques/ methodologies applicable to their own work (theory or research-based).

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

The Learner:

- **Analysis:** with critical awareness can undertake analysis of complex, incomplete or contradictory areas of knowledge communicating the outcome effectively
- **Synthesis:** with critical awareness, can synthesise information in a manner that may be innovative, utilising knowledge or processes from the forefront of their discipline/practice
- **Evaluation:** has a level of conceptual understanding that will allow her/him critically to evaluate research, advanced scholarship and methodologies and argue alternative approaches
- **Application:** can demonstrate initiative and originality in problem solving; can act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level, making decisions in complex and unpredictable situations

Key/Transferable Skills

The Learner:

- **Group working:** can work effectively with a group as leader or member; can clarify task and make appropriate use of the capacities of group members; is able to negotiate and handle conflict with confidence
- **Learning resources:** is able to use full range of learning resources
- **Self evaluation:** is reflective on own and others' functioning in order to improve practice
- **Management of information:** can competently undertake research tasks with minimum guidance

- **Autonomy:** is independent and self-critical learner, guiding the learning of others and managing own requirements for continuing professional development.
- **Communications:** can engage confidently in academic and professional communication with others, reporting on action clearly, autonomously and competently
- **Problem solving:** has independent learning ability required for continuing professional study, making professional use of others where appropriate

Practical Skills

The Learner:

- **Application of skills:** can operate in complex and unpredictable, possibly specialised contexts, and has an overview of the issues governing good practice
- **Autonomy in skill use:** is able to exercise initiative and personal responsibility in professional practice
- **Technical expertise:** has technical expertise, performs smoothly with precision and effectiveness; can adapt skills and design or develop new skills or procedures for new situations.

HE LEVEL TD

Development of Knowledge and Understanding

The Learner:

- **Knowledge base:** has great depth and systematic understanding of a substantial body of knowledge; can work with theoretical/research knowledge at the forefront of the discipline at peer reviewed standards/publication quality
- **Ethical issues:** can analyse and manage the implications of ethical dilemmas and work pro-actively with others to formulate solutions
- **Disciplinary methodologies:** has a comprehensive understanding of techniques/ methodologies applicable to the discipline (theory or research-based).

Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

The Learner:

- **Analysis:** with critical awareness, can undertake analysis, managing complexity, incompleteness of data or contradiction in the areas of knowledge
- **Synthesis:** can undertake synthesis of new approaches, in a manner that can contribute to the development of methodology or understanding in that discipline or practice
- **Evaluation:** has a level of conceptual understanding and critical capacities that allows independent evaluation of research, advanced scholarship and methodologies; can argue alternative approaches
- **Application:** can act independently and with originality in problem solving, is able to lead in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level

Key/Transferable Skills

The Learner:

- **Group working:** can lead/work effectively with group; can clarify task, managing the capacities of group members, negotiating and handling conflict with confidence
- **Learning resources:** is able to use full range of learning resources
- **Self evaluation:** is reflective on own and others' functioning in order to improve practice
- **Management of information:** can undertake innovative research tasks competently and independently

- **Autonomy:** is independent and self-critical as learner; guides and supports the learning of others and can manage own continuing professional development.
- **Communication:** can communicate complex or contentious information clearly and effectively to specialists/non-specialists, understands lack of understanding in others; can act as a recognised and effective consultant
- **Problem solving:** can continue own professional study independently; can make use of others professionally within/outside the discipline

Practical Skills

The Learner:

- **Application of skills:** can operate in complex and unpredictable/specialised contexts that may be at the forefront of knowledge; has overview of the issues governing good practice
- **Autonomy in skill use:** can act in a professional capacity for self/others, with responsibility and largely autonomously initiative in complex and unpredictable situations
- **Technical expertise:** has technical mastery, performs smoothly with precision and effectiveness; can adapt skills and design or develop new skills/procedures for new situations

5 PART E: GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND NOTES

- 5.1 Programmes will not necessarily require an equal division of credits between levels within a given programme total. Programme specifications should indicate clearly where such flexibility exists.
- 5.2 Two modules can share the same teaching while being assessed at different levels. They will carry different identifying codes, and they will differ in the learning outcomes that relate to the appropriate levels and there will be different assessment criteria.
- 5.3 Credit is awarded:
- for learning achieved and verified through reliable and valid assessment;
 - for the achievement of specified learning outcomes at or above a threshold pass level.
- 5.4 Progression to a certain stage of an undergraduate programme may not require the completion of a full 120 credits.
- 5.5 Colleges have the responsibility to determine the appropriateness of the academic programme of each of their students. However, that responsibility at undergraduate level should be guided by the following principles where flexibility may be sought:
- (a) The allowance of a maximum of 150 credits at level 1 for first degrees is permissive only; it is anticipated that most programmes will contain only 120 at that level.
 - (b) Any exceptional variation to the number of credits at level 1 beyond the permitted limit (but never to exceed 180), to widen student opportunities in foreign languages, IT and work-related experience, must be Approved by the Dean of the Faculty of Taught programmes

- 5.6 A limited number of credits required for an award may be accepted through accredited (certificated) prior learning. APL guidance can be found at <http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/academic/tls/tqa/Part%208/8RTQAAPELpaper1.pdf>
- 5.7 The minimum credit value accorded to a module shall be 10. Subsequent credit allocations shall be in multiples of 5.
- 5.8 Failure at a higher level does not mean that a lower qualification cannot be awarded. However, where a student does not demonstrate the outcomes set out in a qualification descriptor, a lower qualification should only be awarded if the student has demonstrated the outcomes required for that qualification.
- 5.9 Subject to the approval of the Dean of the appropriate faculty, credits in excess of a programme's normal requirements may be taken only where the assessment scheme is structured to take the excess into account.
- 5.10 Exceptional cases concerning the varying of award criteria may be considered on their merits by Faculty Boards and the Flexible Combined Honours Degree Board or the Dean/Chair acting on their behalf.

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¹ This degree is aligned with award level 6 to reflect the required content of credits at level

² Including the initial M-level component of the 4-year, new route PhD

³Taught Doctorate