



Credit Framework

Scope

All taught and research programmes leading to an award or award of credit of City, University of London

Senate Regulations

[15 \(Undergraduate Programmes\)](#), [16 \(Graduate Programmes\)](#), [17 \(Postgraduate Programmes\)](#), [19 \(Assessment Regulations\)](#), [23 \(Masters Degrees by Research\)](#), and [24 \(Doctoral Programmes\)](#)

Date approved/re-approved

June 2010 (minor typographical amendments August 2012)

Additional minor typographical amendments October 2012

June 2014 amendments to credit structure of postgraduate programmes from 2014-15

Date for review

To be reviewed on a periodic basis, with allowance for minor annual updates of roles and responsibilities by Education Committee, as required

To be read in conjunction with Section 3 of the Quality Manual including:

Programme Approval Policy

Programme Amendment Policy

RP(E)L Guidelines

Equality and Diversity statement

City, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.

City, University of London's Credit Framework

For a glossary of terms related to the credit framework, assessment and programme development at City, University of London please see the Quality Manual.

1. Purpose

City University of London's Credit Framework provides the basis upon which programmes at the University are structured. Within this framework, programme teams develop programmes most suited to individual disciplinary contexts, including taking account of any relevant benchmark statements and/or professional body requirements.

The Credit Framework is designed to support appropriate flexibility of curriculum design and delivery within commonly understood boundaries, thereby providing a mechanism for University-wide understanding and recognition of student achievement. It is also designed to support national and international initiatives associated with the accumulation and transfer of student credit.

The Credit Framework is used during programme approvals, amendments and reviews. It contains information on the following areas:

- The number of credits comprising a module and a programme;
- The grounds upon which credit is awarded;
- Accreditation of Prior Learning and Prior Experiential Learning; □ Credit levels;
- The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System; and
- Types of awards made by the University.

All programmes are expected to follow the Credit Framework; however, for programmes involving a partner institution, a different programme structure may be appropriate. The structure of the partnership programme and any deviation from the University's Credit Framework will be considered during the programme approval process.

2. Credit Structure of programmes and modules leading to an award of the University

Undergraduate programmes at City, University of London

- A base of 15 credits per module or multiples thereof.
- Strongly encouraged to incorporate at least one 30 credit module per year.
- The expected norm for a three year undergraduate programme is 120 credits per year and 360 credits in total¹.
- Four year programmes (for example programmes with credit-bearing placements and Integrated Masters) will equate to a greater number of credits. These programmes will normally contain at least 480 credits.

Postgraduate programmes at City, University of London

- A base of 15 credits per module or multiples thereof unless prevented by professional body accreditation requirements².

¹ Some undergraduate programmes at Cass Business School contain 150 credits per year and 450 credits in total (440 for BSc (Hons) Actuarial Science) as a result of market reasons.

² This applies to new and redesigned programmes from 2014-15. Programmes operating with a base of 5 credits should move to the adoption of a base of 15 credits during the next Periodic Review.

- Normally 180 credits overall. It is possible for this total to be exceeded if there are strong market reasons for this.

Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes provided by validated institutions

- Modules of any size based on 5 credits or multiples thereof.
- Normally, undergraduate programmes would contain 120 credits per year and 360 credits overall and postgraduate programmes would contain 180 credits overall. It is possible for this total to be exceeded if there are strong market reasons for this.

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programme Directors, in liaison with School Boards of Studies, are also encouraged to:

- Make interim awards, or earlier exit routes and certificates of credit, available in programmes where this is academically appropriate.
- Provide appropriate opportunities for student choice in terms of subjects/specialisms studied and/or pattern of study.

3. Award of credit

Modules are defined by their learning outcomes, level and notional study time (in hours) and placement within a programme of study. Credit is gained for the successful completion of the specified learning outcomes of a module of study. Normally, 10 notional study hours are associated with 1 credit (this includes all the time dedicated to the achievement of the specified learning - contact time, private study and assessment).

The grounds for awarding credit are set out in the University's Assessment Regulations.

All elements of a programme that contribute to the final award, including work based learning, should be integrated within a credit-rated module. Similarly, professional placements should be credit rated if they are formally assessed against specified learning outcomes and contribute to the final award.

Accreditation of Prior Learning/Prior Experiential Learning (AP(E)L)

In some programmes, it might be possible for students to gain credits either for:

- learning derived from study at this or another institution for which they have previously been assessed and/or awarded credit (APL); OR
- learning derived from a student's life experience which has not previously been assessed and/or awarded credit (APEL).

The process for awarding AP(E)L is set out in the University's Assessment Regulations and in the University's AP(E)L guidelines.

4. Level of credit

Levels and credit values associated with qualifications are described in the table below and are broadly consistent with the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and national credit guidelines.

Credit level descriptors are guides that identify the relative complexity, intellectual challenge, depth of learning and learner autonomy expected at each level and the differences between the levels. They reflect a range of factors including:

- the complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding
- links to associated academic, vocational or professional practice
- the degree of integration, independence and creativity required
- the range and sophistication of application/practice
- the role(s) taken in relation to other learners/workers in carrying out tasks.

They are used as general descriptions of the learning involved at a particular level, and are not specific requirements of what must be covered in a module or unit.

Programmes may include modules at one level below the award level where appropriate and within reasonable limits. The limits on the number of credits allowed at a lower level are outlined in the table below.

There are a number of instances of a single module being delivered during different years/Parts of a programme. This can occur for two reasons:

- A module is delivered at different levels of the FHEQ. Where this occurs, separate module specifications are required to demonstrate the different levels of delivery, appropriate learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each Level. Formally, they will be identified as different modules
- A module is delivered in different years but is taught and assessed at a single level. Where this occurs, a single module specification is sufficient as the learning outcomes, assessment criteria and levels of delivery are the same.

5. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) aims to enhance the understanding of, and comparability between, programmes across institutions within the European Higher Education Area. It works on similar principles to those governing City's institutional credit framework, including notional learning hours and learning outcomes.

The workload for a full time student over an academic year is normally equivalent to 60 ECTS. This may be exceeded in some instances. Over a calendar year (for example for postgraduate programmes), this can equate to 90 credits.

Nationally it is accepted that 1 ECTS is equivalent to 2 UK credits. The following is normally assumed:

- 7.5 ECTS per 15 credit module [therefore 15 ECTS per 30 credit module].
- Normally 60 ECTS per year for an undergraduate programme and 180 ECTS per undergraduate programme overall. This total will be exceeded if the programme includes a number of UK credits which is greater than the expected norm for an undergraduate programme ³2.
- Normally 90 ECTS per postgraduate programme. This total will be exceeded if the programme includes a number of UK credits which is greater than the expected norm for a postgraduate programme.

European credits are based on credit level descriptors of a similar nature to those upon which UK credits are based. These descriptors provide generic descriptions of the achievements and abilities associated with different qualifications in a number of areas.

³ Some undergraduate programmes at Cass will include 75 ECTS per year and 225 ECTS overall (220 for BSc (Hons) Actuarial Science)

European credits are recorded in programme and module specifications.

6. Types of award

Programme specifications will indicate the type of award.

The awards of the University are governed by Senate Regulations 15 (Undergraduate Programmes), 16 (Graduate Programmes), 17 (Postgraduate Programmes), 23 (Masters Degrees by Research) and 24 (Doctoral Programmes).

7. Credit Framework Table

Qualification	Qualification Level (City and FHEQ)	Former Qualification Level	Minimum Overall Credits ⁴	Minimum Credits at Level of Qualification	FQEHEA Cycle ⁵	ECTS credits (from FQEHEA)
PhD	8	D	Not typically credit-rated		Third cycle (end of cycle)	Not typically creditrated
Professional Doctorate ⁶	8	D	540	360		
Research Masters	7	M	Not typically credit-rated		Second cycle (end of cycle)	The minimum required is 60 ECTS but 90-120 ECTS is more typical
Taught MPhil	7	M	360	240		
Masters	7	M	180	150		
Integrated Masters Degree ⁷	7	M	480	120		
Postgraduate Diploma	7	M	120	90		60 ⁷
Postgraduate Certificate	7	HE3	60	40		30
Honours Degree	6	HE3	360	90	First cycle (end of cycle)	180
Ordinary Degree	6	HE3	300	60		150
Graduate Diploma	6	HE3	120	90		60
Graduate Certificate	6	HE3	60	40		30
Foundation Degree	5	HE2	240	90	Short cycle	120

⁴ Credit values shown are the minimum which are typically associated with the qualification

⁵ Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

⁶ Professional doctorate programmes include some taught elements in addition to the research dissertation. Credit practice varies but typically professional doctorates include a minimum of three calendar years of postgraduate study with level 7 study representing no more than one-third of this ⁷

Integrated master's degree programmes typically include at least 480 credits of which at least 120 credits are at level 7

⁷ Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates, Graduate Diplomas and Certificates and Diplomas and Certificates of Higher Education are not classified as end of cycle qualifications in the FQ-EHEA but still have ECTS attached to them

Diploma of Higher Education	5	HE2	240	90		120
Certificate of Higher Education	4	HE1	120	90		60
Foundation Year⁸	3	HE0	120	N/A		60

8. Reference documents and websites

- City's Quality Manual
- QAA website and documents, including an introduction to credit and the FHEQ
- SEEC website and documents, including information on level descriptors
- How to use Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria – David Gosling and Jenny Moon – 2002 Third edition SEEC

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⁸ The Foundation Year is an award of credit and an exit route from a programme. It not an award of the University but, where offered, will form the first part of a Programme and will be included as such in the programme specification