

Academic Quality Framework Chapter 7

AQF7 Academic Regulations, Part A: Awards and Programmes

Introduction	3
Approved Awards Delivered by Northeastern University London	4
Degree Apprenticeships	5
Awarding Credit for Individual Courses	6
Approval of Academic Awards and Qualifications	6
Award Certificates	7
Academic Transcripts and Higher Education Achievement Record	8
Honorary Awards	9
Programmes of Study Leading to Awards	9
Credit Framework and Progression of Programmes of Study	9
Credit Equivalency	11
Language of Instruction	12
Version History	13

Introduction

1. The University has been recognised as a provider approved to deliver its own academic taught awards. The University must therefore ensure that the Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates, and other academic awards and distinctions delivered and conferred by it, including those included within an apprenticeship or work related learning programme, are comparable in standards with awards granted and conferred throughout the Higher Education sector in England; all programmes approved by the University must be of such an academic standard as to fulfil these requirements. Accordingly, the University pays due regard to the UK Quality Code, the apprenticeship Standard published by the Institute for Apprenticeship and Technical Education (IfATE), and to the Apprenticeship Funding Rules published by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), and any Professional Statutory Regulatory Body, as relevant to the programme.
2. For each academic award it establishes, the University states a benchmarked definition with reference to The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-awarding Bodies (FHEQ) published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and in developing and approving an apprenticeship programme supported through this qualification, ensures that content and mode meet the knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours set out in the related Standard and End-point Assessment Plan.
3. The University offers programmes of study leading to credits and award qualifications at the following Higher Education Levels:
 - 3.1. Level 4: Certificates of Higher Education
 - 3.2. Level 5: Diplomas of Higher Education
 - 3.3. Level 6: Ordinary Bachelor's Degrees
 - 3.4. Level 6: Bachelor's Degrees with Honours, Degree Apprenticeships
 - 3.5. Level 7: Postgraduate Certificates; Postgraduate Diplomas and Taught Master's Degrees, Master's Degree Apprenticeships
4. The University uses a credit scheme for all programmes, including degree apprenticeships programmes and work related learning programmes. The University uses credits in a system of recognition of prior knowledge learning and experience and in the Initial Needs Assessment of every Apprentice ensuring that each apprenticeship programme is suitable for the Apprentice and their role as an apprentice.

5. The number of credits awarded for each qualification is in line with those typical of credit value arrangements in England published in the UK Quality Code (see [Credit Framework and Progression of Programmes of Study](#)) and any exemptions to the apprenticeship programme conferred as result will be clearly set out as such in the Apprentice’s Commitment Statement and reflected in a reduction in content, duration and/or price.
6. Regulations regarding entry with advanced standing, recognition of prior learning and limitation about the re-use of credits may be found in the University’s Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer Policy. Where the Apprenticeship reduction in response to prior learning conflicts with other PSRB regulations, awards or standards, the apprenticeship Funding Rules (ESFA) take precedence.
7. Apprenticeships are shared programmes of ‘off the job’ learning led by the University and learning at work led by employers in order to demonstrate competency in a specific occupation. Degree Apprenticeships include achievement of a Bachelor’s or Master’s Degree that must fulfil both the requirements of the published Apprenticeship Standard, and the degree awarding requirements placed upon the University. There are enhanced approval processes in place for the approval of a degree apprenticeship.

Approved Awards Delivered by Northeastern University London

8. The University delivers its own approved awards. The standard of the award is that expected of a student who, having met the relevant admissions requirements, has successfully completed the programme of study to a defined threshold of knowledge, skills and competence for a defined range of credits, or linked to achievement of the Apprenticeship knowledge, skills, experience and behaviour.
9. The University’s own approved awards are defined with a formal award description and an abbreviated form, for example:

	Formal Award Description	Abbreviated Form
Single subject programmes	Bachelor of Arts Degree with Honours in Philosophy	BA (Hons) Philosophy

Joint subject programmes	Bachelor of Science Degree with Honours in Politics and Data Science	BA (Hons) Politics and Data Science
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10. Approved awards at the University give recognition to different standards of student achievement by the award of commendation, distinction or classification (see AQF7 Part C). This is separate to the overall award classifications in an apprenticeship with a non-integrated end-point assessment.
11. Those achieving awards may use the abbreviated form of the award after their name e.g.: Ms Grace Clements, BA (Hons).
12. Programmes of study may be approved leading to any of the University's approved awards, and programmes may be designated with more than one award outcome as an intermediate award within an approved programme.
13. Approved awards such as Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education, Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma may be considered as intermediate or exit awards.
14. Approved awards may be discontinued for the purpose of future programmes but will be retained on the University's records where students have been conferred with such awards.

Degree Apprenticeships

15. Degree Apprenticeships develop knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) required for a specific occupation and are combined with high-level learning typically comprising of a Bachelor's or Master's degree. Degrees offered as part of a Degree Apprenticeship are aligned to the apprenticeship standard as well as programme specifications and other relevant benchmarks.
16. Degree apprenticeships test both occupational competence and academic learning and can either be integrated or non-integrated:
 - 16.1. Integrated – an End-point Assessment (EPA) tests competence against the apprenticeship standard and is credit-bearing so forms part of the overall degree programme. The EPA is conducted in accordance with the assessment plan associated with the apprenticeship standard. On successful completion, learners will receive a degree certificate and an apprenticeship award. The End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) is the same as the training provider.

- 16.2. Non-integrated - an End-point Assessment (EPA) tests competence against the apprenticeship standard and is not credit-bearing. The EPA is typically completed after the successful completion of the degree and conducted in accordance with the assessment plan associated with the apprenticeship standard. On successful completion, learners will receive a degree certificate and an apprenticeship award. The End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) is independent of the training provider.
17. For learners, certificates can only be issued either:
 - 17.1. At the end of the apprenticeship, after the End-point assessment has been achieved, or
 - 17.2. When the College and Employer have formally agreed in writing, that the Apprentice will not re-take the End-point Assessment.

Awarding Credit for Individual Courses

18. The University can approve individual courses and award credit. Such courses will be approved under the University's Course Approval procedure as stated in AQF4 Programme and Course Approval and Modification.
19. These courses will be reviewed and managed as a University programme/course, following the Academic Quality Framework, i.e., subject to annual monitoring etc.

Approval of Academic Awards and Qualifications

20. The University's Academic Board holds the authority to approve and establish all new academic awards and qualifications for the University.
21. In considering proposals for new academic awards and qualifications, Academic Board consults widely and reviews internal and external context including the FHEQ, noting especially the following:
 - 21.1. The potential position of the new award within the FHEQ.
 - 21.2. The characteristics and Level that would both distinguish the new award from existing University awards and relate it to them and to the qualification of other Higher Education or awarding bodies.
 - 21.3. The potential for new programmes of study under such a new award.

- 21.4. The relationship to existing awards and sustainability of existing awards for new programmes of study.
 - 21.5. The potential for programmes of study capable of leading to this award and likely scale of demand.
 - 21.6. The new award's potential for recognition by the academic community, other institutions and professions, applicants, students and employers.
22. The procedure for submitting a proposal for new awards is similar to that required for a new programme leading to an existing award (see [AQF4 Programme and Course Approval and Modifications](#)).

Award Certificates

23. The University produces one award certificate for each student achieving an approved award of the University.
24. For apprentice's the timing of certification is:
- 24.1. For learners undertaking a non-integrated degree apprenticeship, certificates will be triggered by the apprentice completing their End-point Assessment (EPA). EPA takes place following the degree training.
 - 24.2. For learners undertaking an integrated degree apprenticeship, certificates will be triggered by the apprentice completing their University programme. EPA takes place as part of the body of the degree.
 - 24.3. For learners who leave their programme early an exit award may be issued if the required number of credits have been achieved and confirmed at the Progression and Award Board (PAB).
25. The award certificates will normally include the following information:
- 25.1. The student's full legal name.
 - 25.2. The title of the award and classification.
 - 25.3. The subject of the award.
 - 25.4. The name of the University as the awarding body.
 - 25.5. The month and year of the award.
 - 25.6. The University seal.

26. All award certificates should be signed by the Dean of Northeastern University London (the Dean) and the Registrar.
27. Graduates of the University requiring replacement or duplicate degree certificates should contact [Registry](#). This may incur an administrative fee.
28. For a non-integrated degree apprenticeship, students must be informed in writing that they have met their gateway requirements before their End-point Assessment can commence. This notification will be sent by the Director of Apprenticeships to the End-point Assessment Organisation.
29. For learners, certificates can only be issued either:
 - 29.1. At the end of the apprenticeship, after the End-point assessment has been achieved; or
 - 29.2. When the University and Employer have formally agreed in writing, that the Apprentice will not re-take the End-point Assessment; or
 - 29.3. See interim awards above.

Academic Transcripts and Higher Education Achievement Record

30. The University provides an academic transcript to each student at the end of each academic year/stage, which states the mark of each assessment element, overall course mark and the number and level of credits awarded for each course and in total for that academic year/stage.
31. Existing, past students and graduates of the University may request a replacement academic transcript directly from the University by contacting [Registry](#). This may incur an administrative fee.
32. Academic transcripts requested will be produced using the University's approved logo and stamped with the official University stamp.
33. Academic transcripts will normally contain the following information:
 - 33.1. The title of the award (if exit award has been granted).
 - 33.2. The full name of the student/graduate.
 - 33.3. The student's/graduate's candidate number.
 - 33.4. The student's/graduate's intake year and mode of study.
 - 33.5. The overall course marks.
 - 33.6. The number and Level of credits achieved for each year.

33.7. The year of graduation or exit award (if relevant).

33.8. Signature of the Registrar.

Honorary Awards

34. Other University titles and recognition are given on behalf of the University on the authority of Northeastern London Board with the approval of Academic Board.
35. Honorary Fellowship:
 - 35.1. The University may confer Honorary Fellowships on individuals who have made a particular contribution to the work or development of the University. Nominations will be considered by Academic Board.
 - 35.2. Honorary Fellowships are not conferred on current governors, current staff or registered students.

Programmes of Study Leading to Awards

36. Programmes of study leading to the awards of the University are developed through the University academic structures, considered in light of external academic and professional advice, and approved under delegate authority of Academic Board through its committees.
37. Arrangement for the approval of new programmes that lead to an award of the University are defined in [AQF4 Programme and Course Approval and Modifications](#).
38. Definitive information about programmes are published in Programme Specifications and Course Descriptors. They, or extracts from them, serve as the basis for the information about programmes provided for students in Programme Handbooks and Course Syllabus.
39. The named award to which a programme leads reflects the Level, nature and subject focus of the programme, is determined at programme approval, and is included on the award certificate.

Credit Framework and Progression of Programmes of Study

40. The normal number of credits awarded for academic awards are shown in the table below and are in line with the published Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ):

Table 1 FHEQ Levels and Credits

Award	FHEQ Level	Total number of credits required
Certificate of Higher Education	4	120
Diploma of Higher Education	5	240
Ordinary Bachelor's Degree	5	300 (60 at L6)
Bachelor's Degree with Honours	6	360 (90 at L6)
Postgraduate Certificate	7	60
Postgraduate Diploma	7	120
Taught Master's Degree	7	180

41. One credit corresponds to approximately ten hours of 'learning time' (i.e., including all scheduled teaching sessions, independent study, research, formative assessment and summative assessment).
42. Credits Awarded and Progression Specific to Undergraduate programmes:
- 42.1. The number of credits awarded per year of study of undergraduate full-time programmes is normally 120. The period of study for undergraduate degree programmes is typically the equivalent of at least three full-time academic years.
 - 42.2. For an undergraduate degree, if the student is studying 60 credits or less in an academic year, that is classed as part-time.
 - 42.3. For Degree Apprenticeship programmes the number of credits awarded over a 12-month period is normally 120. The period of study for an undergraduate degree apprenticeship programme is 36 months.
43. Credits Awarded and Progression Specific to Taught Master's programmes:
- 43.1. The number of credits awarded per year of study of postgraduate full-time Taught Master's programmes is normally 180. The period

of study of Taught Master’s programmes is typically the equivalent of one year of a calendar year.

- 43.2. Postgraduate two-year part-time Taught Master’s programmes comprise of 180 credits in total, with a maximum of 90 credits awarded per year
- 43.3. A Taught Master’s programme comprises of 180 credits at FHEQ Level 7 which normally include a dissertation or equivalent piece of independent work of values up to 60 credits at FHEQ Level 7. Where the dissertation or equivalent course is less than 60 credits, the remaining courses comprising the dissertation stage will be agreed at programme approval and published in the Programme Specification or Programme Handbook.
- 43.4. Degree Apprenticeship Master’s programmes comprises of 180 credits at FHEQ Level 7 which normally include a capstone project or equivalent piece of independent work of values up to 60 credits at FHEQ Level 7.
- 43.5. Where satisfactory completion of courses is pre- or co-requisite for submission of the dissertation/capstone project, this will be agreed at the programme/course approval event and included in the Course Descriptor.

Credit Equivalency

- 44. Credit transfer allows credits taken at one higher education provider to be counted towards a qualification studied at another provider.
- 45. In collaboration with Northeastern, the University has agreed the credit equivalencies between the two institutions. This falls in line with standard credit transfer arrangements between UK and USA higher education providers.
- 46. The European Credit Transfer System (ETCS) has been set up to enable students to move across countries with their academic qualifications and study abroad periods recognised.

NU London	Northeastern University	European Credit Transfer System
10 credits	2.677 credits	5 credits
15 credits	4 credits	7.5 credits
30 Credits	8 credits	15 credits

47. For an apprenticeship, credit awards are the same size as undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, however, credit and content are also mapped to the relevant Apprenticeship Standard and End-point Assessment Plan published by the IfATE.

Language of Instruction

48. With the exception of some foreign language or culture courses, English is the language of instruction and assessment on all programmes of study.
49. Exceptions to this regulation may only be approved through the programme approval processes detailed in [AQF4 Programme and Course Approval and Modification](#).
50. Support is provided to students with English as a second language (see [AQF9 Student Guidance and Learner Support](#)).

Version History

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23.1.0	April 2023	April 2023	Head of Quality Assurance	May 2024
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1.0	February 2023	March 2023	Head of Quality Assurance	May 2024
Referenced documents	AQF2 Teaching and Learning; AQF9 Student Guidance and Learner Support; Admissions Policy; AQF8 Student Recruitment and Admissions; AQF4 Programme and Course Approval and Modifications.			
External Reference Point(s)	UK Quality Code; Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-awarding Bodies; ESFA; Apprenticeship Standard.			