

Programme Specification for FdA in Payroll Management – Programme Specification

This document applies to Academic Year 2020/21 onwards

1. Awarding Institution/Body	University of Worcester
2. Teaching Institution	Heart of Worcestershire College and the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals
3. Programme accredited by	Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals (for equivalence with professional awards only)
4. Final Award	FdA
5. Programme Title	FdA Payroll Management
6. Pathways available	N/A
7. Mode and/or site of delivery	At regional centres throughout the UK
8. Mode of attendance	Part time, predominately distance learning
9. UCAS Code	N /A
10. Subject/Professional Benchmark Statement	CIPP Competence Framework and Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark Statement (FDQB)
11. Date of Programme Specification Preparation/Revision	December 2007, Revised November 2009, Revised August 2010, Revised June 2011 Revised December 2011, Revised August and October 2014 – amendment to regulations. Revised January 2015 – formatting only November 2016 – change to College name and RPL amendment August 2017 – AQU amendments August 2018 – AQU amendments February 2019 – AQU amendments March 2019 – Revision of FDPP1111 August 2019, AQU amendments to Section 19 August 2020 – AQU amendments to Section 19.

12. Educational aims of the programme

The FdA in Payroll Management is a programme designed around the needs of employers in the payroll sector.

The programme is designed for all payroll employees, irrespective of managerial background who:

- Are currently employed in the payroll sector.
- Wish to develop or consolidate their professional skills.
- Aspire to positions of management within the payroll sector and so improve their career development prospects.
- Seek to develop and/or update the technical skills required by the payroll sector.

Students learn on a distance basis through study of the materials supplied for each module by the CIPP. Each module is also supported by a formal teaching day, revision opportunities and tutorial support. Teaching, learning and support are discussed more fully later in this specification and in the Course Handbook. The 15 modules that make up the Foundation

Degree are completed in a 36 month period, each year of the programme also carries an award level from the CIPP. The programme has two focuses, the first being the development of the many technical skills required of an employee in the payroll sector and the second being the development of management skills appropriate to the management of a small group of employees. In both cases the programme encourages students to relate new knowledge and skills to their own workplace situation and to develop a wider understanding of how their organisations function. In particular, the purposes of the programme are to provide students with:

- The knowledge, understanding and skills to become more effective in their professional roles;
- The capacity to develop and apply technical and managerial skills;
- A critical understanding and a proactive approach to the contribution their sector makes to their organisation as a whole;
- The ability to be an independent learner, explore their potential and increase their awareness and confidence;
- The basis for further professional development and encouragement to take responsibility for their own CPD and those for whom they are responsible;
- Progression opportunities to other HE programmes or professional awards.

Foundation Degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- Knowledge and critical understanding of the well established principles in their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed.
- Ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied.
- Knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study.
- An understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

Typically, holders of the qualification 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 holders will have:

- The qualities and transferrable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision making.

(The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, QAA, 2008)

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment

Knowledge and understanding

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate, to a professional level, the technical requirements necessary for a career in the payroll sector • Operate as the manager of a small team of payroll employees (WWO) • Assess the contribution of the payroll function to the organisation as a whole 	<p>Examples of teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% of the content relates directly to the technical requirements of payroll administration. Demonstration is via assessment which is examination and assignment at both Level 4 and 5. • 27% of the content is designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead a small team in a technical discipline • The management theme expands throughout the course enabling students to place their function within a whole organisation context
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Skills and other attributes

<p>Intellectual/cognitive skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the professional development needs of themselves and others • Take personal responsibility for and expand the boundaries of their own learning (IOLP) 	<p>Examples of teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module FDPP 2337 has been specifically designed to enable students to take a proactive approach to their professional development needs. The managerial techniques of appraisal etc studied in FDPP1228 complements this and allow students to assist in the development of others • As participants in a distance learning course students must take responsibility for their own learning from an early stage and appropriate support measures eg tutorial, helpline, study days, revision school etc recognise and react to this. Payroll is a narrow specialism and the course design reflects this in its early stages however the introduction of a range of management topics increasing to 60% of the content in Year 3 enables students to develop the wider learning skills essential both to this level of study and also to enable progression. This is complemented by a similar shift in emphasis in assessment with examination in the early period giving way to increasing use of assignments in the latter stages thus allowing students to practice the wider research skills and prepare them for lifelong learning.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake further training and development that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations • Use a range of techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information (ICT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This FdA prepares students for junior management roles within a payroll setting. In this it is both vocationally relevant and also prepares students for the managerial level most frequently found within their particular workplace setting. Progression to an appropriate Honours degree is a realistic option upon completion of this award. • The range of finance based payroll modules require analytical skills to be applied to a variety of data. The use of case studies during examination further develops this skill.
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<p>Practical skills relevant to employment & professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis in a variety of forms (COMMS) • Solve complex problems through critical analysis (AON) (PS) • Apply underlying concepts and principles to an employment context 	<p>Examples of teaching, learning and assessment methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments form a vital communication method and allow this skill to be assessed. The Work Based Project challenges students to further develop through a major, research based, piece of work. • The course allows students to deploy two routes to achieve this outcome. As stated previously they may take a financial bias where there is ample scope for problem solving in many of the modules assessment pieces. They may also prefer a managerial bias and assessment in those modules lend themselves to the analysis of problem situations. • All of the content of this course is directly relevant to the student's workplace. Most of the scope for demonstrating this, however, lies in the assignment strand of the assessment devices. These represent 72% of the overall assessment load and are all work based. That is they require the student to examine and discuss issues they encounter in their workplace and propose solutions.
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(Abbreviations in brackets are Key Skills that are developed as a result of achieving these outcomes))

The learning strategy is based upon blended learning methods whereby students are supplied with the required course material as specified by the CIPP. Each module is thus supported with a bespoke package of learning materials containing both knowledge and activity. This, in turn, is complemented by a student workbook for competence based modules and it is through the completion of the workbook that the student is able to test their developing competences. These features are supported by both formal tutorial and tutorial support available both on-line and on the telephone.

In addition to the above each module is further supported by a teaching day when students are brought together on a regional basis for direct tuition in the content of the module.

The CIPP is the UK's largest originator of payroll literature and learning material and provides all students with extensive material. The Course Team have weighted the course such that the early study is heavily biased towards the payroll discipline whilst at Year Three the bias is heavily towards the managerial discipline. In this way students are able to develop greater independence in learning, undertake wider research and prepare for progression at a pace that suits their developing learning maturity.

Much of the content of the FdA in Payroll Management is technical in nature and this has dictated the allocation of staff from HOW and the CIPP and their respective module responsibility on the programme. Institutional responsibilities per module are displayed in the programme structure chart.

Table 13.1 Mapping of programme learning outcomes against constituent modules (includes signposting of key skills)

	FDPP1111	FDPP1112	FDPP1113	FDPP1114	FDPP1115	FDPP1226	FDPP1227	FDPP1228	FDPP2221	FDPP2222	FDPP2333	FDPP2334	FDPP2335	FDPP2336	FDPP2337
Demonstrate, to a professional level, the technical requirements necessary for a career in the payroll sector		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X			X	
Operate as the manager of a small team of payroll employees (WWO)					X			X				X	X	X	X
Assess the contribution of the payroll function to the organisation as a whole	X					X	X						X		
Evaluate the professional development needs of themselves and others								X							X
Take personal responsibility for and expand the boundaries of their own learning (IOLP)					X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Undertake further training and development that will enable them to assume significant organisational responsibility												X	X	X	X
Use a range of techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information (ICT)		X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Effectively communicate information, arguments, and analysis in a variety of forms (COMMS)			X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Solve complex problems through critical analysis (AON) (PS)			X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Apply underlying concepts and principles to an employment context					X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

14. Assessment Strategy

Assessment options have been constrained due to the programme being a blended learning course. Principal amongst these constraints are:

- The need to meet the requirements of both the University of Worcester (Quality Standards for Flexible and Distributed Learning, August 2006, 5.3) and those of the CIPP regarding the risk of impersonation.
- The technical nature of much of the content does not lend itself to a wide variety of assessment techniques.
- Employers expect the qualification to provide proof of technical competence.

As a result of these considerations assessment for this programme is through a mix of work related assignments and examinations. Examinations ensure that a student has to physically appear at regular periods in order to pass the course and are the most appropriate assessment technique to provide proof of technical competence. Work related assignments provide greater freedom for students to demonstrate their own development in areas such as critical analysis and to relate their learning to their workplace. As an added safeguard against fraud/impersonation each work related assignment must be signed off by the student's employer prior to submission. Thus the assessment strategy has been devised to address the constraints above and also be appropriate to the technical nature of the subject.

73% of assessments, the assignments, on the programme are work based. Work based learning is therefore integrated with the assessment strategy where possible. Although the course design team are of the view that all the assessments are work related it is accepted that the assignments are the assessments where students will be able to directly apply their work place experiences to their study and vice versa. In making this statement the design team draw upon the definition of work based learning provided by the QAA (Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 9, Work based and placement learning, P2, 14).

'Work based learning is learning which is integral to a higher education programme and which normally derives, in part, from experiences in the workplace'.

and

'It can range from a student taking one module within a programme to an entire programme that has, at its core, activities designed around the individual's occupation'.

The FdA in Payroll Management has 11 out of 15 modules that have an assessment element linked directly to the student's workplace. The assessment criteria are available in the Student Handbook.

Examination schedules and assignment submission schedules will either be detailed in the Course Handbook for direct entry students, or will be negotiated with the employer alongside release dates for the teaching periods. The latter applies only where an employer is sponsoring a discrete group of students. In this case the agreed schedules will be issued to students pre start as an addendum to the Course Handbook.

In marking assessed work, Internal Verification and Moderation form part of the quality assurance procedure. Assessed work will be subject to the University of Worcester procedures. The University of Worcester Link Tutor is also given full access to these materials and asked to comment formally through UW channels and also informally on an ongoing basis. Where there is some doubt as to the authorship of an assessment the programme will follow the University of Worcester published policy for investigating plagiarism.

Formative assessment is also an important feature of the programme and in this the course design team has been guided by the rationale and approaches offered in the QAA Code of Practice; Section 6: Assessment of Students. September 2006 (P35)

'Formative assessment has a developmental purpose and is designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and how it can be improved and/or maintained'.

Formative assessment takes place through the personal tutor, feedback on progress with the module workbooks and, unusually, feedback on examination performance.

In line with the University of Worcester Assessment Policy assessments for the individual modules have been designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have successfully met each learning outcome. Each module outline thus specifies an assessment strategy outlining the nature of the summative assessment exercises it employs and the respective weighting of each assessment item in its overall assessment loading. If a student fails to achieve a learning outcome no compensation within module assessments is possible and regulations governing failure are set out in the UW Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

All examination assessments are marked as either Pass or Fail with a minimum pass mark of 70%. This may appear high but it is a guarantee to the profession that a high standard of technical competence has been achieved.

The minimum pass mark for work assessed by assignment is D- in line with normal University practice.

15. Programme structure and requirements

The FD in Payroll Management comprises the following 15 modules:

Year One

Code	Title	Level	Credits	Status	Assessment	Responsibility
FDPP1111	Introduction to Payroll & Pensions	4	15	M	Assignment	CIPP
FDPP1112	Assessment of pay and benefits	4	15	M	Exam	CIPP
FDPP1113	Deductions from pay	4	15	M	Exam	CIPP
FDPP1114	Absence processing	4	15	M	Exam	CIPP
FDPP1115	Working in a team	4	15	M	Assignment	HOW

Upon successful completion of these five modules students will be awarded the Practitioner Certificate in Payroll by the CIPP.

Year Two

Code	Title	Level	Credits	Status	Assessment	Responsibility
FDPP1226	Provision of effective & efficient administration	4	15	M	Assignment	CIPP
FDPP1227	Contractual aspects of payroll administration	4	15	M	Assignment	CIPP
FDPP1228	Leading the team	4	15	M	Assignment	HOW
FDPP2221	Advanced payroll processing	5	15	M	2 x Exam	CIPP

FDPP2222	Define & manage systems, security & risk	5	15	M	Assignment	CIPP
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Upon successful completion of these five modules students will be awarded the Advanced Practitioner Certificate in Payroll by the CIPP.

Year Three

Code	Title	Level	Credits	Status	Assessment	Responsibility
FDPP2333	Flexible benefits, finance & budgets	5	15	M	Assignment	CIPP
FDPP2334	Improving Payroll Services and Operations	5	15	M	Assignment	HOW
FDPP2335	Understanding Payroll Customers and Clients	5	15	M	Assignment	HOW
FDPP2336	Work based project	5	30	M	Assignment	HOW/CIPP
FDPP2337	Personal effectiveness and professional development	5	15	M	Portfolio	HOW

Upon successful completion of these five modules students will be awarded the Diploma in Payroll Management by the CIPP.

Students who complete the 15 modules, and thus accumulate 240 credit points, are eligible for the award of FdA in Payroll Management.

Students who exit, having completed 120 credit points, qualify for a Certificate in Higher Education.

The programme is designed to allow students to complete the FD in Payroll Management award in part time mode over a period of up to 3 years.

16. QAA and Professional Academic Standards and Quality

There is no appropriate QAA Subject Benchmark for the subject matter within this Foundation Degree however the CIPP is the leading body, nationally, for payroll related qualifications and, as such, is acting in the role of a Lead Body. The CIPP has an employer membership base of over 5000 organisations and it is through consultation with these members that the competences required of an employee working in the payroll sector have been established. These competences have been further refined into key areas of knowledge and understanding and it is these that have been used to inform both course design and assessment strategy for the FdA in Payroll Management.

The programme conforms to the requirements for undergraduate qualifications set out by 'The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland – August 2008'. The FdA in Payroll Management is located at Level 5. The Programme Learning Outcomes (Section 16) have been devised with full reference to the Descriptors for a qualification at Level 5.

The programme also conforms, both in design and execution, to the QAA Foundation Degree qualification benchmark (May, 2010) and is especially effective in fulfilling each of the five defining characteristics of Foundation Degrees contained therein.

17. Support for students

The following support services are in place to provide for students on the programme:

- Induction programme with inputs from HOW, CIPP and UW.
- Designated personal tutor – contractually bound to provide both evening and weekend access to students via e-mail and/or telephone. Precise times of availability are agreed between tutor and tutor group. The personal tutor may, in some cases, also be the module tutor but this is generally the exception.
- Direct telephone re-routing to CIPP qualifications team in the event of tutor unavailability.
- Guaranteed 48 hour response time for all enquiries within business hours.
- Project selection advice and guidance for the Work based project in the event that the student's manager does not wish to contribute.
- Access to the contact details of other members of the tutor group for mutual support.
- Comprehensive study-pack accompanying each competence based module.
- A weekly e-mail magazine sharing payroll changes and issues.
- A monthly magazine.
- Access to HOW's VLE for wider research opportunities.
- Access to CIPP and HOW's student support offering a range of support services.
- Equal opportunities unit implementing codes of practice in relation to disability, racial and other forms of discrimination.

18. Admissions policy, criteria and procedures

The normal minimum entry requirement for Foundation Degree courses is the possession of 4 GCSEs (Grade C/4 or above) and 1 A Level (or equivalent Level 3 qualification).

The current UCAS Tariff requirements for entry to this course are published in the prospectus and on the UW website <https://www.worc.ac.uk/journey/a-z-of-courses.html>

See [Admissions Policy](#) for other acceptable qualifications.

Entry to the programme shall require all applicants to apply to the CIPP using HOW application forms. These give a variety of information about current work experience, qualifications and motivation. These will be checked by the Course Manager who must be satisfied that the applicants are at the appropriate stage in their development to benefit from the programme and capable of undertaking a programme of academic work. This data is held at HOW, CIPP and the University of Worcester.

Applications to the course are generally from mature students who are currently working in a payroll environment as a result the general admissions requirement of the programme is either:

- Mature students with current payroll experience or,
- Holders of the CIPP Payroll Technicians Certificate awarded by the CIPP or equivalent qualification.

It is a further requirement for admission that the applicant be working in, or have access to, a payroll environment.

Recognition of Prior Learning (includes APCL)

Details of acceptable level 3 qualifications, policy in relation to mature students or applicants with few or no formal qualifications can be found in the prospectus or on the University webpages. Information on eligibility for recognition of prior learning for the purposes of entry or advanced standing is also available from the University webpages or from the Registry Admissions Office (01905 855111).

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

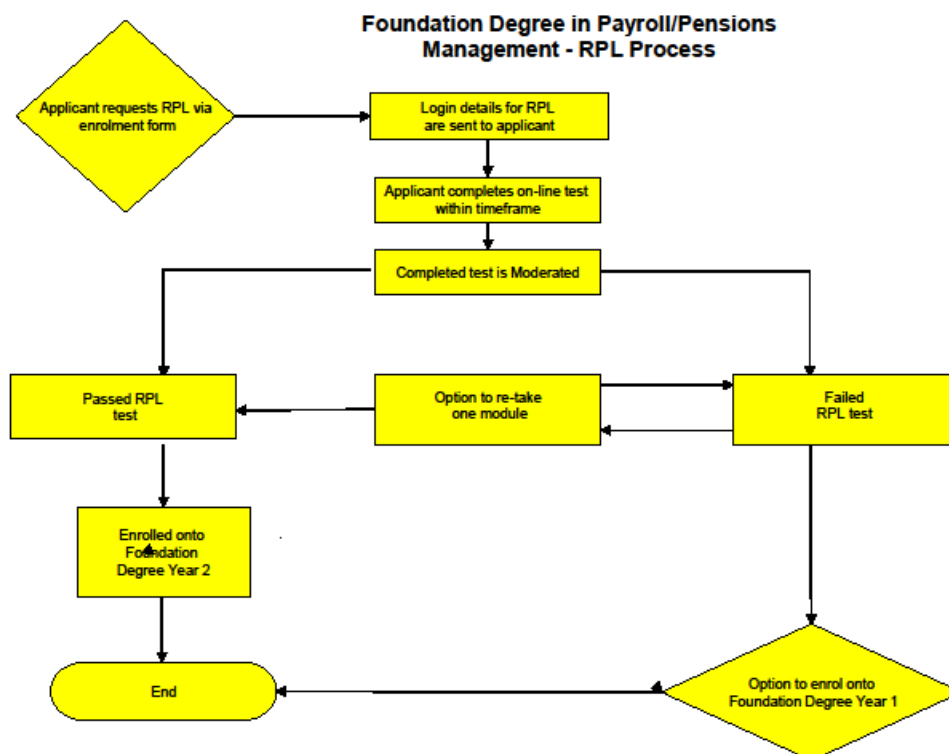
Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)

Holders of the CIPP Payroll Technicians Certificate (Extended) will be permitted entry at the Year Two stage. Other appropriate qualifications at Level 4 will be considered depending on the content studied and award achieved.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Applicants seeking RPL will normally be invited to undertake an on-line test. This test has been designed to test prior learning, however achieved, against the learning outcomes of the Year One modules. Completed tests will be automatically marked and a 'pass' mark of 70% set. Each completed application is signed off by CIPP management prior to the RPL decision being notified to the applicant. All results are held electronically and stored for future reference. The Course Manager will sample at a rate of 15% to ensure consistent application. A sample of the results will be made available to the External examiner.

The RPL process is outlined below.



19. Regulation of assessment

There are two intakes to the course per annum: Autumn and Spring. There are 3 Subject Assessment Boards (SABs); February, June and September, each of which is followed by a Board of Examiners (BoE) meeting. The terms of reference for these Boards is set out in the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework. The SAB and BoE is chaired by the Head of Worcester Business School or nominee and results are prepared by the University for presentation to the Boards. A Registry Services officer supports the Board and prepares the minutes. The Head of Collaborative Services is an ex officio member of the BoE.

Module results are presented to the SAB for confirmation on a rolling basis, ie they are presented to the next scheduled Board following completion of moderation of assessment for the module concerned. Provisional results are normally released to students on the Friday of the week in which moderation occurs and students who have failed are issued with the details of reassessment items of coursework shortly thereafter.

With the exception of the four Level 4 modules in Year 1 and one level 5 module in Year 2 that are assessed by examination, reassessment opportunities are scheduled immediately following the Examination Board, with students given a 3 week period in which to resubmit. Results of reassessed modules are confirmed at the next scheduled Board, except in relation to the final modules in Year 3 which, if a student fails, are reassessed following the September Subject Assessment Board, and confirmed by Chair's action. This in order to permit the students to graduate with their cohort. The September SAB will make a clear decision as to whether any outstanding reassessments for students scheduled to graduate can be confirmed by Chair's action and, where appropriate, specify the involvement of the External Examiners.

The arrangements for reassessment in the event of module failure are therefore different from those for most of the other University courses and the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework have required amendment for this course. The regulations that follow have been approved to apply to the FdA Payroll Management.

Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#)

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module or a pass for examinations for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 7 days (one week) of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 7 days (one week) will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

Retrieval of failure

- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D- or 'pass' in the case of examinations.
- For modules assessed by formal examination (FDPP1112, 1113, 1114 and 2221) re-assessment will take place after the Examination Board.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- For all other modules, which are assessed by coursework, re-assessment will take place in the 3 week period immediately following each result. The result dates are published annually in the Key Dates Schedule.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.
- These provisions supersede item 12.4 in the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework of the University of Worcester.

Requirements for Progression

- A student will be permitted to progress from Level 4 to Level 5 if, by the time of the reassessment Board of Examiners, they have passed at least 90 credits at Level 4. Outstanding Level 4 credits must normally be studied in the following academic year.
- A student who, by the time of the reassessment Board of Examiners, has failed 90 credits or more (after exhausting all reassessment opportunities) during the academic year, will have their registration with the University terminated
- If a student has not passed at least 90 credits by the reassessment Board of Examiners, the student is not permitted to progress to the next level and will be required to either complete outstanding reassessment or retake the failed modules the following academic year. Students will be able to carry forward any passed modules.

Award	Requirement
Cert HE	In order to be eligible for the exit award of Certificate in Higher Education in the named subject/area of study, a student must have passed at least 120 credits in total including the mandatory modules for level 4 of the award as specified on the award map.
Foundation Degree FdA in Payroll Management	120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5 as specified on the award map.

These awards are not classified.

The CIPP awards specified in Section 15 validated by the CIPP are also available to students who meet the requirements of the CIPP.

In accordance with UW practice, all assignment briefs and examination scripts are submitted for approval to the External Examiners before each occasion used.

Internal moderation is conducted by the CIPP for all examinations and by HOW and UW for all assignments.

Exam Board arrangements are carried out in conjunction with Worcester Business School and the University of Worcester Registry Services.

20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

The team view this aspect as a key strength. The involvement of employers in the design of this programme has been significant, perhaps more so than any other Foundation Degree. Over three thousand employers responded to the consultation exercise conducted by the CIPP that led directly to the development of the FdA in Payroll Management. Employer involvement in the course continues at a steering level with employer representatives on the Board of the CIPP and regular employer forums hosted by the CIPP.

At the course level the majority of the CIPP tutors are practising payroll experts, most of whom are also active payroll managers. This approach brings a very high level of currency and experience both to the course and to student learning.

The course has been designed primarily for those already working in the payroll sector wishing to develop their careers by enhancing their skills and knowledge in preparation to becoming payroll supervisors and managers. The focus therefore is upon career development and there are ample success stories from current students and recent graduates to support this stance.

For details of options for further study following the Foundation Degree, please contact CIPP.