

## POLICY

### Policy for Progression Arrangements from Foundation Degrees to Top-Up/Honours Degrees in the Planning, Approval, Review and Operational Management of Foundation Degrees

#### Contact Officer

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#### Purpose

##### 1 Purpose

1.1 This policy provides specific guidance on University expectations and requirements for the progression arrangements from all University approved Foundation Degrees to Honours Degrees which are to be taken into account in the planning, approval, review and operational management of Foundation Degrees.

1.2 This reflects one of the distinctive features of Foundation Degrees defined in the [QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement \(QAA, September 2015\)](#) [see Annex 1 – Extract from QAA FD Characteristic Statement, UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards].

#### Overview

Foundation Degrees are **Level 5 qualifications** within 'The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ)' (QAA, 2014). Foundation Degrees have a number of **distinctive features** as outlined in the **QAA Foundation Degree Characteristic Statement (QAA, 2015)**. These differentiate the Foundation Degree award from other Level 5 qualifications.

Foundation Degrees are intended to **integrate academic and work-based learning** through close collaboration between employers and higher education providers. They are vocational higher education qualifications that are designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge relevant to employment and reflect the needs of employees and employers, with a view to meeting regional and/or sector skills requirements. Foundation Degrees should also promote inclusion and widening participation and provide a route into higher education for non-traditional learners or those that prefer a more applied curriculum, with further opportunities for progression to Level 6 of an Honours Degree or a professional qualification. Thus Foundation Degrees, delivered by the University and its collaborative educational partners, make a significant contribution to the University's strategic aims to develop employable graduates and to promote inclusion and widen access and participation in Higher Education.

## Scope

The Policy is relevant to all staff (at the University and its collaborative partner organisations) who are responsible for or involved with the design, approval, review and course management of Foundation Degrees and their associated Level 6 Honours route or Top-Up Degrees. The policy is also made available to students.

## The Policy

### **2 Policy for Progression Arrangements from Foundation Degrees to Top-Up/Honours Degree**

2.1 All Foundation Degrees must have an identified Honours Degree progression route established at the point of approval of the Foundation Degree (which may be Level 6 of an existing award, or a new bespoke Level 6 Top-Up award).

2.2 There should normally be guaranteed entry to at least one identified Top-Up/Level 6 Honours Degree on the basis of successful achievement (pass) of the UW approved Foundation Degree, although in certain cases completion of a bridging programme (which may or may not be credit bearing) may also be required.

2.3 The identified progression route (including any bridging programme) should not normally exceed 1.3 years full-time study or the part-time equivalent.

2.4 The proposed Honours Degree progression route should be identified as part of the Foundation Degree course development proposal. If this is to be a new bespoke Top-Up award, this must normally be presented through the course planning and approval process at the same time as the Foundation Degree.

2.5 Additional progression routes from Foundation Degrees to Honours Degrees or professional qualifications (with entry at level 5 and/or 6 and/or dependent on specific entry criteria, including achievement of specific grade profiles in the Foundation Degree), may also be identified but this must be in addition to at least one guaranteed progression route to a Top-Up/Level 6 Honours Degree as outlined above.

2.6 Any departure from the above (such as, progression to an award at another HEI, delay in the development of the Honours Degree progression route or requirements for progression set above the level of successful achievement of the Foundation Degree) requires a case to be made and is subject to specific approval by ASQEC.

2.7 Programme specifications and course handbooks must make explicit the linked progression routes, the procedures for application and progression arrangements and any specific requirements related to each. Linked progression routes must also be identified in the prospectus entry and course web pages for the Foundation Degree.

2.8 The Foundation Degree Course Handbook must set out the arrangements to support the transition of students to the linked Honours/Top-Up degree. This could include, planned study skills development, visits from staff and/or students from the Honours degree, preparation and advice for choice of progression route and subsequent module choices, Independent Study preparation, specific induction arrangements for the Honours/Top-Up degree. This should be scrutinised through the approval process.

2.9 Where subsequent changes are made to either the approved Foundation Degree or the linked Honours Degree, the impact of these changes on the relationship between the linked awards must be

	taken into account and associated programme specifications and course handbooks (and other related public information) updated appropriately.
<b>Date Approved</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> July 2012
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Board
<b>Date of Commencement</b>	July 2012
<b>Amendment Dates</b>	Updated reference to QAA Foundation Degree Characteristic Statement (ASQEC 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2016)
<b>Date for Next Review</b>	2016/17
<b>Related Policies, Procedures, Guidance, Forms or Templates</b>	<a href="#">Principles and Guidance for the Design of Foundation Degrees in the Undergraduate Regulatory Framework</a>
<b>Policy/Policies Superseded by this document</b>	None

## Annex 1

### Extract from QAA Foundation Degree Characteristic Statement – ‘Progression’ (QAA, 2015, p.5)

#### 2.4 Progression

Clear routes that facilitate opportunities for successful progression from foundation degrees towards another qualification are a feature of foundation degrees. Such routes are established when foundation degrees are approved, and identify the link(s) between the foundation degree and other qualification(s). Such links may be to programmes offered by higher education providers and/or by professional and other educational organisations.

Higher education providers awarding foundation degrees may guarantee progression to at least one bachelor degree with honours programme, with the time required to complete the qualification being comparable to that involved in a traditional bachelor's degree programme. Progression from foundation degrees to another qualification may require a bridging programme. Such arrangements, when established at approval, ensure that learners progressing onto the next programme are adequately prepared.

A range of routes may be available, some of which are more commonly used than others. Information for students about progression arrangements is available through programme handbooks and prospectuses.

In cases where a learner could gain additional professional accreditation and/or qualifications in the course of studying for a foundation degree, the requirements of professional and vocational bodies are included as part of the approval process.

Foundation degrees are intended to provide the knowledge and skills that are necessary to enable employees to be versatile and adaptable in progressing to and within work. Employability is a key aspect in foundation degree programmes, and its inclusion equips and assists learners to enhance their employment opportunities, and/or allow them to prepare for a career change.

Careers guidance is important in enabling learners to take responsibility for managing their own careers and lifelong learning. For more information on careers guidance see the Quality Code, *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*.