



Award of Academic Credit

Policy and Framework

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1. POLICY

The University of Gibraltar will follow an academic governance and credit framework which mirrors that of UK universities. In advance of the development of a Quality Code for Higher Education in Gibraltar, the University of Gibraltar will comply with national qualification frameworks published by the UK Quality Assurance Agency as part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code>). The Credit Framework is designed to enable learners to accumulate credit and to facilitate the transfer of that credit within and beyond the providing institutions.

2. UK and EUROPEAN FRAMEWORKS

- 2.1 The UK Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (**CATS**) allocates **1 credit point per, typically, 10 hours** of learning effort or notional learning time, used as a measure of volume. Notional learning time is the number of hours which it is expected that a learner (at a particular level) will spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes. This will comprise a variable combination of contact time, (lectures, seminars, labs etc.) and self-directed learning time (background reading prior to classes, research for written assignments, seminar presentations, and examination preparation). A UK full-time higher education year is normally made up of 120 CATS credits acquired over 1200 hours of learning effort.
- 2.2 The UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (**FHEQ**) recognises a progression of academic attainment exit qualifications comprising: undergraduate certificate; undergraduate diploma; bachelor's degree with honours, masters and doctorate.
- 2.3 The policy also ensures that the University is in line with the recommendations of the Bologna Process and the European Credit Transfer System (**ECTS**) designed for the European Commission. ECTS is a central tool in the Bologna Process, which aims to make national systems more compatible. The ECTS scheme allocates **1 credit point per, typically, 20 hours** of learning effort or notional learning time, used as a measure of volume. Following the definition of the European Commission, a normal full-time European higher education year is comprised of 60 ECTS credits acquired over 1200 hours of learning effort.
- 2.4 The European Qualifications Framework (**EQF**) recognises eight reference levels describing 'learning outcomes'. Each of these levels is aligned with the differing national academic qualification terminologies across Europe for the corresponding learning outcomes. Thus levels 4-8 correspond to UK FHEQ exit qualifications. **FHEQ** in which levels 4 to 8 correspond to qualifications offered by the University, *viz.*,

3. UNIVERSITY of GIBRALTAR FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The University policy will ensure that, as far as possible, it conforms to both the UK and European frameworks and that this is manifest in its academic offerings and exit qualifications.
- 3.2 The relation between UK and European learning outcomes and exit qualifications as implemented by the University is as follows.

<u>EQF level</u>	<u>FHEQ qualification</u>	<u>Credit points CATS</u>	<u>Credit points ECTS</u>
4	Undergraduate certificate	120	60
5	Undergraduate diploma	120	60
6	Bachelor's degree with honours	360	180
7	Masters	180	90
8	Doctorate	n.a.	n.a.

The credit points are those required to progress from the previous level to the exit qualification of the next level. Credit points are not normally attributed to doctorates.

- 3.3 A list of the University's study programmes by exit qualification, learning effort hours and credit points can be found in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 In so far as possible and where applicable the University will structure its academic programmes within shell frameworks (flexible academic structures within which robust and, often, bespoke programmes of study can be developed, in a series of sequentially nested offerings).
- 3.5 The University of Gibraltar has implemented a shell framework for the offering of Master's degrees, which is provided as an example of how academic credit is allocated and accumulated, via a scaled offering which progresses from a PGCert through a PGDip to a full Master's Degree (Appendix 2). This framework ensures that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of graduate attributes and capabilities defined for this programme. The diagram below illustrates how this is structured:

4. DEGREE CLASSIFICATION

4.1 For taught undergraduate awards, the weighted numerical average of the overall marks for different years of the degree translated into degree award as follows. programme will be

• Class 1	First class honours	70%+
• Class 2i	Upper Second Class Honours	60% - 69%
• Class 2ii	Lower Second Class Honours	50% - 59%
• Class 3	Third Class Honours	40% - 49%

4.2 For taught postgraduate awards, the weighted numerical average of the overall marks will be translated into degree awards as follows.

• With Distinction	70%+
• With Merit	60% - 69%
• Pass	50% - 59%
• Pass (PGCert, PGDip)	40% - 49%

5. TRANSCRIPTS of CERTIFICATES, DIPLOMAS and DEGREES

5.1 Credits will be recorded on the Quercus student records system which generates transcripts for students upon successful completion of an academic programme.

5.2 Official transcripts of the University will reflect the UK's Higher Education Achievement Report and the European Diploma Supplement. Transcripts will show attained credits under both CATS and ECTS.

6. MONITORING and REVIEW

The Vice-Chancellor, who is responsible for academic leadership and quality at the University of Gibraltar, has set up an Academic Credit Committee led by the Director of Academic Programmes and Research and including the Finance and Academic Records Manager, European and International Funding Officer and the Students Enrolment and Academic Records Officer. The Committee will meet once a quarter to ensure that the number of hours per subject, and the work assigned for each subject correspond to the appropriate amount of credits. Course credits will be assigned accordingly to contact hours, practical sessions, mentoring, self-study and assessment and will be assigned to modules at the point the course is being designed. The Lead for Academic Frameworks of the University plays an important role in liaising with Academic Board and its Quality and Standards Sub-committee to ensure that credit system is consistently applied across the programmes. The Academic Credit Committee will also carry out ongoing reviews of course credit through formal course modification processes, annual monitoring and periodic review (aided by external examining processes and AQSC).

Appendix 1

Credit points per qualification



Qualification	FHEQ Credits	ECTS Credits	Learning Hours
Certificate of Higher Education	120	60	1200
Diploma of Higher Education	240	120	2400
Foundation Degree	240	120	2400
Honours Degree	360	180	3600
Graduate Certificate	60	30	600
Graduate Diploma	120	60	1200
Postgraduate Certificate	60	30	600
Postgraduate Diploma	120	60	1200
Integrated Masters	480	240	4800
Taught Masters	180	90	1800
Research Masters	180	90	1800

Outline of Shell Framework for a Generic Master’s Degree Programme

