Bishop Auckland College

The Open University

Regulations for validated awards of The Open University

Effective from 1 september 2015

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INTRODUCTION

These Regulations apply to all new student cohorts on programmes leading to an Open University (OU) validated award with effect from 1st September 2015* (or earlier if deemed appropriate by the Partner institution and the OU). The Open University is the awarding body and the qualifications awarded are OU qualifications. However the programmes of study are developed and delivered by Partner Institutions. The Open University and its Partner Institutions have a formal relationship governed by the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education which sets out expectations for academic standards, academic quality and information about higher education provision.

For students registered before the 1st September 2015, the regulations under which they originally registered will continue to apply.

For individual students who are either returning to their programme of study after an approved break from their studies or are transferring to a new or different programme, the regulations of the cohort to which they are returning, will apply.

These Regulations will be referenced in the documentation for each validated programme of study, together with any specific requirements from professional, statutory or regulatory bodies and/or local legislation (for non-UK Partner institutions), as agreed in the validation process for the programme.

In addition to these regulations each programme of study will have a Programme/Students Handbook containing procedures and requirements that are specific to that programme.

GLOSSARY

Apprenticeships students	An apprentice is a student aged 16 or over, who must be in paid employment for the duration of their apprenticeship and will combine working with studying for a work-based, academic or combined qualification.
Assessment component	An individual piece of work or a collection of pieces of work that forms a summative assessment.
Assessment element	An assessment element is a piece of work that contributes to an assessment component.
Award	Open University qualification conferred to a student following the successful completion of an approved programme of study.
Compensation	A means of allowing marginal failure in a limited number of modules on the basis of an overall performance which is sufficient to merit the award of the qualification concerned. Compensation can be applied to the results of a student who has failed to attain the required pass mark at undergraduate level
Co-requisite module	A co-requisite module must be studied simultaneously with, or before, another designated module within a programme of study.
Credit	A means of quantifying and recognising learning, expressed as 'numbers of credits' at a specific credit level. Within this document it is assumed that one credit represents 10 notional hours of learning (including individual study).
Credit level	An indicator of the relative complexity, depth and autonomy of learning associated with a particular module (used in credit frameworks).
Degree Apprenticeship/Higher Degree Apprenticeship	Higher and degree apprenticeships are available at levels 4 to 7. They combine work with study and may include a work-based, academic or combined qualification or a professional qualification relevant to the industry. Higher apprenticeships go from level 4 to 7 and are equivalent to a foundation degree and above e.g. a professional qualification. Degree apprenticeships are available at levels 6 and 7 (full bachelor's and Master's).
Direct Entry	Exemption to stage of a programme without award of OU credit). Direct entry via stage exemption allows an applicant into Open University validated awards at level 5 or 6 of an undergraduate qualification on the basis of completion of an

	appropriate certificated qualification from a recognised UK HE programme of study.
Exit award	A lower award than one for which the student is registered. Such an award may be conferred if a student completes part of, but not all, of the requirements of the programme for which he or she is registered.
Institutional Approval	The process through which an institution is judged to be a satisfactory environment for the presentation of programmes leading to The Open University validated awards. Approval is conferred for a period of up to five years.
Institutional Review	The process through which an institution is critically reviewed for the purposes of confirming that it continues to meet The Open University's requirements. Approval is conferred for a further period of up to five years.
Learning outcome	What a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate after completing a defined element of study. Learning outcomes features within the programme specification must align with module descriptors.
Module	A self-contained, formally structured, credit-bearing unit of study with explicit learning outcomes. (Some institutions use the word 'course' to refer to individual modules.)
Module specification	A document that defines key characteristics of a module, and includes learning outcomes, models of teaching and learning, and assessment schemes.
Partner institution	An institution approved by The Open University for the delivery of validated programmes of study that lead to Open University awards.
Pre-requisite module	A pre-requisite module is one that must be successfully completed before progressing to another designated module or stage within a programme of study.
Programme	A schedule of academic study and assessment which leads to an Open University award
Programme specification	A document that defines key characteristics of an award, including learning outcomes, models of teaching and learning, assessment schemes, and how individual modules relate to qualification levels and contribute to the classification of awards.
Progression	The advancement (or progress) by a student from one stage of a programme to an adjacent higher stage. Such progression is the subject of regulations of the University and must be confirmed at a meeting of the Board of Examiners.

Qualification level	One of a series of defined points in the Further and Higher Education Qualification Framework (or Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework in Scotland). They are numbered in ascending order. Qualifications at the same qualification level share characteristics and require similar achievement.
Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)	The UK government-appointed agency that safeguards the quality and standard of the higher education awards offered by UK universities. The Open University complies with the codes of practice defined by the QAA and is subject to its scrutiny
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Assessment of prior learning that has occurred in any of a range of contexts including school, college and university, and/or through life and work experiences. Once recognised through this process, prior learning can be used to gain credit or exemption for qualifications and/or personal and career development. RPL includes Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL), Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL).
Resit	To take again part or all failed assessments component in order to pass a module. Resit of the failed component does not require the student to participate in classes.
Retake	To take all assessments components of a module again, having failed a resit attempt. Retake of the failed component may require the student to participate in classes to prepare them for the second attempt.
Stage	A stage of an undergraduate programme is a collection of study consisting of a total of 120 credits. In full-time programmes of study, a stage is equivalent to one year of study. Stages are usually commensurate with a credit level.
Validation	The formal process whereby a new programme of study is critically appraised by The Open University, in order to establish that it meets the requirements for approval. Approval of a programme of study is for a period of up to five years before a further validation (re-validation) is required. Within this document references to the validation process also include the revalidation process.

A FRAMEWORK OF AWARDS

1.0 General

1.1 The Open University validated awards are defined with reference either to the Further and Higher Education Qualification frameworks of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) or to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), but not to both.

1.2 Each national qualifications framework provides a set of learning outcomes and skills expected of the holders of Open University validated awards.

2.0 Credit

2.1 The Open University uses a UK credit-based system for its validated awards, and it defines these awards primarily in terms of the qualification level and volume of credit required for each.

2.2 The main determinant for the volume of UK credit is notional learning time. This is defined as the reasonable measure of time it would take a student to achieve the learning outcomes of the activities. Total notional student learning time includes all activities required to achieve the learning outcomes of a programme, including formal study, assessment, and independent learning.

2.3 Notional learning time for a 'standard' full-time academic year is 1200 hours at undergraduate qualification level and 1800 hours at postgraduate qualification level. These are intended as benchmarks only, and the actual time students take to achieve the required outcomes may be shorter or longer depending on the knowledge and skills of students at entry and on their rate of progression through the programme, and the impact of any reasonable adjustments made for students with impairments.

2.4 A UK credit value is twice its European Credit Transfer (ECTS) equivalent (e.g. a 20 UK credit module equates to 10 ECTS credits).

2.5 Each module of a programme will be assigned a single designated credit level (module assessment is unique to a given credit level). The volume and level of credit assigned to any one module is determined and approved by The Open University at the point of validation.

2.6 The assignment of credit to learning should be understood in the following terms:

(a) Credit is allocated to a learning activity on the basis of its stated learning outcomes.

(b) A student will only be assigned credit after demonstration through assessment of the achievement of the stated learning outcomes. Credit cannot be assigned if no assessment has taken place or if the assessment has not been appropriately conducted.

(c) The number of credit points assigned is independent of the standards (grades awarded). Students achieving higher standards will not be

allocated more credit points. The higher standard will be reflected in the grade and classification of the pass.

3.0 Validated Awards offered by The Open University

3.1 The Open University confers the following Validated Awards although Partner institutions do not necessarily offer programmes leading to all of these awards.

Award title	FHEQ Qualification level	Overall number of credits required	Levels of credit required
Professional Certificate	4	60	60 at any UG level
Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	4	120	120 at level 4
Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)	5	240	120 at level 5 120 at level 4
Foundation degree (FD)	5	240	120 at level 5 120 at level 4
Ordinary Bachelor's degree (BA, BSc, Bed, BEng) [*Exit Award only*]	6	300	60 at level 6 120 at level 5 120 at level 4
Bachelor's degree with honours (BA(Hons), BSc(Hons), Bed, BEng, LLB (Hons[1]))	6	360	120 at level 6 120 at level 5 120 at level 4
Bachelor of Music*(BMus)	6	480	At least 120 at Level 6 No more than 120 at Level 4 Remaining credits at Levels 5 or 6
Bachelor of Osteopathy (BOst)	6	480	At least 240 at Level 6 No more than 120 at Level 4 Remaining credits at Levels 5 or 6
Graduate Certificate (Grad Cert)	6	60	60 at level 6
Graduate Diploma (Grad Dip)	6	120	120 at level 6

Award title (continued)	FHEQ Qualification level	Overall number of credits required	Levels of credit required
Professional Graduate Certificate of Education	6	120	A validated PGCE provision may have only 60 credits at FHEQ level 6, with 60 credits at a lower level. This meets the National Qualifications Framework for this type of qualification and validation is therefore permitted by the University for such qualifications.
Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)	7	60	60 at level 7
Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip)	7	120	Min 90 at level 7 Max 30 at level 6
Master's degree (MA, MSc, MArch, MBA, MTh, MfA* MDes)*	7	180	Min 150 at level 7 Max 30 at level 6
Master of Engineering (MEng)	7	480	Min 120 Level 7 Min 120 Level 6 No more than 120 Level 4 Remaining credits at Levels 5 or 6
Taught MPhil	7	360	Minimum 240 at level 7 Remaining credits at level 6 or above
Professional Doctorate	8	540	Minimum 420 at level 8, maximum of 120 at level 7

[1] Bachelor's degree titles of BEd and BEd (Hons) are reserved for programmes of teacher education. Initial or pre-service BEd programmes include a substantial element of teaching practice, and the normal credits of such a BEd programme will be 480. The In-service BEd is designed for students who are already qualified and experienced teachers holding a Certificate in Education or equivalent qualification. Minimum credits: 180.

* These awards have variance in structure and numbers of credits across the sector, as a result the above acts as a guideline on the number of credits which need to be included within the award.

3.2 Students must meet all requirements set out in the programme specification approved by The Open University before a qualification is awarded.

Titles and characteristics of Programmes

A title will be given to an approved programme leading to any taught award and will not be changed without reference to The Open University.

The title will accord with the normal expectations of higher education bodies, relevant professional bodies, students and employers about the level of knowledge and skills to be expected from a person holding such a qualification.

The University recognises four types of honours degrees in named subjects:
A -Subject or field of study degree, for example, BA (Hons)/BSc (Hons) or MA/MSc in Psychology.

B -Major subject or field of study, with a specialist minor (where the minor subject is part of the broad-based field of study that is the major subject of the degree), for example, BA (Hons)/BSc (Hons) or MA/MSc Humanities (Music).

C – Major subject or field of study with a supplementary minor honours subject, (where the minor subject is not part of the field of study which is the major subject of the degree), for example, BA (Hons)/BSc (Hons) or MA/MSc Computing with Psychological Studies.

D – Joint degrees in two approximately equally-weighted subjects or fields of study, for example, BSc (Hons)/BA (Hons) or MSc/MA Philosophy and Psychological Studies.

The Open University's recommended practice for the programme titles that will appear on certificates is that simple, single-subject titles should be used whenever possible.

Where students study more than one subject, up to three separate fields of study may be identified in the title with or without the addition of 'combined studies'.

Where awards include named pathways, the University recommends a minimum requirement of 25% subject specific credits.

B. ADMISSIONS

Students registering for programmes leading to awards of The Open University must have satisfied the admissions criteria approved by The Open University at validation.

4.0 Admissions policy and procedure

Bishop Auckland College Higher Education Admissions Policy has been approved by the Open University. The Policy provides specific guidance on the principles and management of applications and admissions to higher education programmes of study delivered at the College. For further details, please click here.

4.1 This policy should also be read in conjunction with guidance contained in section 22 covering the Recognition of Prior Learning.

5.0 Appeals and complaints regarding the admissions process

5.1 Appeals against a decision not to admit an applicant to a programme of study leading to an Open University award are restricted to those that cite irregularity in the decision-making process (for example. failure to make a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability). The process for arbitrating such appeals is that which has been approved at Institutional Approval/Review. Such appeals must be initiated within four weeks of the date of the original decision.

Bishop Auckland College Higher Education Admissions Appeals Procedure has been approved by the Open University. The Policy provides specific guidance on the principles and management of appeals against admission decisions relating to higher education programmes of study delivered at the College. For further details, please click here.

C. MATTERS RELATING TO REGISTRATION

6.0 General

6.1 A student who is admitted for study on a programme leading to an OU validated award must be registered for that programme with the partner institution.

6.2 The partner institution will submit student name and contact details to The Open University solely for the purposes of recording student details and progression information. By registering with a Partner for a programme leading to an Open University validated award the student agrees to the sharing of their information with The Open University for this purpose. The Open University will not make any contact with students unless there is a specific need in relation to their studies towards an OU validated award. It is the student's responsibility to keep their personal information up to date with their institution and to notify them of any changes or errors.

7.0 Period of registration for Open University awards

7.1 The period of registration will commence on the date the student registers on a programme.

7.2 The minimum and maximum periods within which a student will be expected to complete the programme of study and associated assessment, including the time period for any resit assessments, stated in the box below.

Outline of registration details, including period of registration can be found within the HE Registration for Students Policy, available here.

7.3 Subject to paragraph 7.5 below, a student will remain registered for the maximum period of the award or until they have achieved the award or the registration has been terminated, whichever comes first.

7.4 The period of registration may be extended if:

(a) the student has had to resit or retake parts of their programme of study, see Section D;
(b) the student has been unable to study or complete a year of study due to extenuating circumstances, see Section F;
(c) the student has been given permission to take a study break as described in Section 8 below.

7.5 A student's registration may be terminated if the student has:

(a) committed a serious disciplinary offence or be deemed as unfit to study;
(b) exhausted all opportunities to remedy failure or has made insufficient progress through their programme of study at the required stage;

(c) formally notified the institution that they wish to discontinue their studies and so discontinue their programme;
(d) failed to comply with their financial commitment to the partner institution.

For more information, please see Section D.

Further information on the College process for managing the termination of registration on higher education programmes of study delivered at the College, please refer to the Registration for Students Policy, found here.

7.6 The date of termination recognised by The Open University will be taken as the date on which a partner institution records the student's registration as terminated.

8.0 Interruption of studies

8.1 A student may apply, or be required, to take a study break for a maximum period of twelve consecutive months under the agreed procedure for reasons of ill health or other extenuating circumstances (see Section F).This may be extended in exceptional circumstances as agreed between The Open University and the partner institution.

9.0 Attendance requirement

Further information on the College process for managing Attendance can be found here.

D. ASSESSMENT, PROGRESSION AND AWARD OF CREDIT

10.0 The forms of assessment and its weighting and timing, and the ways in which the learning outcomes are to be demonstrated through assessment, are set out in the module and programme specifications approved by The Open University at the point of validation.

10.1 Each programme handbook contains comprehensive details of the assessment scheme as approved by The Open University in the validation process.

11.0 Minimum requirements for pass

11.1 To obtain an Open University award students are required to complete all parts of the programme's approved assessment and comply with all regulations relating to their programme of study.

11.2 The minimum aggregate pass marks for The Open University validated awards are:

40% for undergraduate programmes
50% for postgraduate programmes.

These minima may apply to assessment elements as stated in the wording of the module specifications, but will apply to modules, stages and qualifications.

12.0 Identification of requirements from professional, statutory and regulatory bodies

12.1 Additional academic regulations required by any professional, statutory or recognised regulatory body will be set out in the relevant programme specification and approved by The Open University in the validation process.

13.0 Submission of assessed work

13.1 Work submitted for a summative assessment component cannot be amended after submission, or re-submitted.

13.2 Student requests for extensions to assessment deadlines will not be approved unless made in accordance with published partner institution guidelines as approved by The Open University.

13.3 Where coursework is submitted late and there are no accepted extenuating circumstances it will be penalised in line with the following tariff:

Submission within 6 working days: a 10% reduction deducted from the overall marked score for each working day late, down to the 40% pass mark (for UG) and 50% pass Mark (PG awards) and no further.

Submission that is late by 7 or more working days: submission refused, mark of 0.

A working day is defined by the partner and submission after the deadline will be assumed to be the next working day.

Students who fail to submit work for assessments or attend examinations shall be deemed to have failed the assessments components concerned and will be marked as 0.

14.0 Assessment scores

14.1 All undergraduate assessment will be marked on a percentage scale of 0-100.

% Scale Score	Performance Standard
70+	Excellent pass
60-69	Very Good pass
50-59	Good Pass
40-49	Pass
0-39	Fail

14.2 All postgraduate assessment will be marked on a percentage scale of 0-100. Taught postgraduate awards may include merit and/or distinction classification (see paragraph 18.1).

% Scale Score	Performance Standard
70+	Distinction
60-69	Merit
50-59	Pass
0-49	Fail

14.3 The final grade for an individual assessment component will be determined after completion of a quality assurance process (e.g. moderation, remarking) as detailed in the partner institution's OU approved policy for moderation.

14.4 Where the result of the overall assessment calculation creates a mark of 0.5% or greater, this will be rounded up to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.5% is rounded to 70%; 59.5% to 60%; and so on). Where the calculation creates a mark below 0.5%, this will be rounded down to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.4% is rounded to 69%; 59.4% to 59%; and so on). For the purposes of rounding up or down, only the first decimal place is used.

The Bishop Auckland College Higher Education Moderation Process has been approved by the Open University. The process is explained in Appendix C of the College Higher Education Assessment and Feedback Policy, click here

15.0 Determining module outcomes

15.1 The overall module mark shall be determined as per the assessment strategy detailed in the module specification and published in the Programme Handbook.

15.2 A student who passes a module shall be awarded the credit for that module. The amount of credit for each module shall be set out in the programme specification and published in the Programme Handbook.

15.3 In order to pass a module a student must achieve the requirement of the module as set out in the module specification and published in the Programme Handbook.

15.4 Where a student is registered only for a module (rather than a qualification) the resit provisions set out in 17.3 will apply.

16.0 Provision for *viva voce* examination

16.1 Exceptionally, viva voce examinations may be required by a Board of Examiners (with the approval of external examiners):

(a) to confirm the progression/result status of a student;
(b) to determine the result status of unusual or borderline cases;
(c) when there is conflicting evidence from the various assessment components;
(d) as an alternative or additional assessment in cases where poor performance in assessment is the result of exceptional circumstances verified through due processes.

17.0 Determining progression and qualification outcomes

17.1 **Module prerequisites and co-requisites**

17.1.1 The paths through which students are required to progress through the programme in order to obtain an award, and the elements identified as compulsory or optional, are set out in the programme specification and approved in the programme validation process.

17.1.2 Progression through any programmes offered by partner institutions may require students to complete prerequisite or co-requisite modules which are set out in the programme specification and approved during the validation process.

17.2 **Stage requirements**

17.2.1 Each of the stages of an undergraduate programme is expected to consist of a total of 120 credits.

17.2.2 In cases where Programmes are not divided into stages (for example, most postgraduate programmes and undergraduate programmes of 120 credits or less) the provisions below apply to the whole programme.

17.2.3 In order to complete and pass a stage of a programme, a student must normally acquire the total number of credits set out in the programme specification at the approved qualification level for the award. Exceptions are restricted to those detailed in paragraph 17.5.3 below or have been exempted through advanced standing, or through the implementation of the processes covering extenuating circumstances (see Section F).

17.2.4 The credit value of each module contributing to a stage determines its weighting in the aggregation of credit for a stage.

17.2.5 Where a student fails a module, the following may apply in the first instance:

(i) Resit (see 17.3 below) – a second attempt of an assessment component within a module, following failure at first attempt.
(ii) Compensation (see 17.4 below) – the award of credit by the Board of Examiners for a failed module(s) on account of good performance in other modules at the same credit level where the learning outcomes have been met.
(iii) Retake – a second attempt of all assessment components within a module following failure at the first or resit attempt. Retake of the failed component may require the student to participate in classes to prepare them for the second attempt. This will be confirmed at the Examination Board.

17.3 **Resit provision**

The board of examiners may, at its discretion, make such special arrangements as it deems appropriate in cases where it is not practicable for students to be reassessed in the same elements and by the same methods as at the first attempt. However, where a validated programme is discontinued, provision has to be made to ensure fair assessment opportunities for all students who have been enrolled.

17.3.1 Resit provision is subject to all the following conditions:

(a) A student may resit the failed assessment components of a module only once. Where there are extenuating circumstances, the Board of Examiners has discretion to decide whether a further assessment opportunity shall be permitted, unless explicitly prohibited in the rules for the programme, as approved in the validation process and programme specification.
(b) A student who does not complete the resit by the date specified shall not progress the programme, except in cases where the process for allowing extenuating circumstances has been followed.
(c) Resits can only take place after the meeting of the Board of Examiners or following agreement by the Chair and the External Examiner of the Board.
(d) A student who successfully completes any required resits within a module shall be awarded the credit for the module and the result for the individual assessment component capped at the minimum pass mark for the module.
(e) A student shall not be permitted to be reassessed by resit in any module that has received a pass mark, or in a component that has received a mark of 40% or above at UG level, or 50% at PG level.
(f) The resit will normally be carried out by the same combination of written examination, coursework etc. as in the first attempt.

17.4 **Compensation for marginal failure**

17.4.1 Unless otherwise stated in the approved programme specification, compensation will be applied at stage level and agreed during an examination board when the following conditions are met:

(a) No more than 20 credits whichever is greater, can be compensated in any one stage of an undergraduate or postgraduate programme.
(b) Compensation is not permitted for modules within awards of less than 120 credits in total.
(c) Examination boards should assure themselves that learning outcomes of the qualification level have been satisfied. The process for evaluating cases will be identified in the programme specification.
(d) A minimum mark of no more than 5 percentage points below the module pass mark has been achieved in the module to be compensated.
(e) Taking the module mark to be compensated into account, an aggregate mark of 40% has been achieved for the qualification level of the

undergraduate programme (except in the case of MEng Level 7 where an aggregate mark of 50% has been achieved).

(f) In the case of postgraduate programmes, taking the module mark to be compensated into account, an aggregate mark of 50% has been achieved.

(g) No compensation shall be permitted for any core project/dissertation/capstone module, as defined in the programme specification.

(h) PSRB requirements may exempt certain modules from compensation – this will be articulated in the programme specifications.

A student who receives a compensated pass in a module shall be awarded the credit for the module. The original component mark(s) (i.e. below the pass mark) shall be retained in the record of marks and used in the calculation of the aggregate mark for the stage or qualification.

17.5 **Options for the retake of study**

17.5.1 If, having exhausted all permitted compensation, resit, and retake opportunities, and a student is still unable to pass, the Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, permit one of the following repeat options:

(a) Partial retake as fully registered student:

(i) The student is not permitted to progress to the next stage of the programme but must retake the failed modules and/or components in full during the following academic year,

(ii) The student has full access to all facilities and support for the modules and/or components being retaken,

(iii) The marks that can be achieved for the modules and/or components being retaken will be capped at the module and/or component pass marks,

(iv) The student retains the marks for the modules and/or components already passed,

(v) No further resit opportunities are permitted.

(b) Partial retake for assessment only:

(i) As in paragraph 17.5.1(a) except that access to facilities and support will be limited to certain learning resources for the module(s) and/or component(s) being retaken. Participation will only be allowed for relevant revision sessions and assessments.

(c) Full retake:

(i) This is only permitted where the student has extenuating circumstances;

(ii) The student does not progress to the next stage of the programme but instead repeats all the modules in the current stage during the following academic year,

(iii) The student has full access to all facilities and support,

(iv) The marks that can be achieved are not capped, and the student is normally entitled to the resit opportunities available. However, a student

is not able to carry forward any credit from previous attempts at the stage.

17.5.2 Where compensation, resit, and retake opportunities have been exhausted, a Board of Examiners may recommend a student for an exit award as defined in Section 20 below.

17.5.3 With the approval of the Board of Examiners students may be eligible to progress to a higher stage of a programme without having completed the requisite 120 points of the lower stage. They may exceptionally be allowed to do so if any of the following conditions are met:

(a) A minimum of 80 credit points at the lower level have been successfully completed including passes in all designated core modules;

(b) All requirements for academic prerequisites for the higher-level modules are met;

(c) The Examination board have approved progression following a successful application for extenuating circumstances, and results are still pending in the student's profile.

17.5.4 Institutions that offer a rolling entry system for qualifications with a high study intensity may find that the timings of examination boards do not coincide with those institutions that offer programmes within the traditional academic year. Under such circumstances, students are provisionally allowed to progress on the programmes, with the recommendation deferred until the next Board of Examiners which must be held within twelve calendar weeks. At which point the student's full profile will be considered and a formal recommendation for progression will be made (if applicable).

18.0 Grading and Classification Awards except Bachelor Honours Degrees

18.1 Validated taught awards, including Masters' degrees, consisting of at least 120 credits at FHEQ level 4 (SCQF 7 for Scotland) or above may be awarded with Merit or Distinction with the exception of ordinary and honours degrees where the award of Merit or Distinction will not apply.

18.2 For the award of Distinction, the overall aggregate mark will be 70% or above.

18.3 For the award of Merit, the overall aggregate mark will be 60% - 69%.

18.4 Where the final result of the award classification calculation creates a mark of 0.5% or greater this will be rounded up to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.5% is rounded to 70%; 59.5% to 60%; and so on).

Where the calculation creates a mark below 0.5% this will be rounded down to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.4% is rounded to 69%; 59.4% to 59%; and so on). For the purposes of rounding up or down, only the first decimal place is used:

18.5 Calculation of a Foundation Degree will be based on the average mark across all modules within Stage 2 (usually Credit Level 5) and Stage 1 (usually Credit level 4) unless the requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) state otherwise.

18.6 Calculation of a DipHE will be based on the average mark across all modules within Stage 2 (usually Credit Level 5) and Stage 1 (usually Credit level 4) unless the requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) state otherwise.

18.6 Calculation of a CertHE will be based on the average mark across all modules within Stage 1 (usually Credit Level 4) unless the requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) state otherwise.

18.7 Calculation of Masters Degrees will be based on the average mark across all modules within a programme unless the requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) state otherwise.

18.8 The award of PgCERT cannot be awarded with Merit.

19.0 Bachelor Honours Degree Classification

19.1 Classification of bachelor degrees will be based on the average mark across all modules within Stage 3 (usually Credit Level 6) and Stage 2 (usually Credit Level 5) at a ratio of 2:1 respectively unless the requirements of a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) state otherwise.

19.2 Honours degrees are classified as:

First class	Aggregate mark of 70% or above
Upper Second class	Aggregate mark between 60% and 69%
Lower Second class	Aggregate mark between 50% and 59%
Third class	Aggregate mark between 40% and 49%

19.3 Where students have directly entered a Qualification Level 6 top-up award (e.g. having previously undertaken a Higher National Diploma (HND) or Foundation Degree (FD) award) the calculation for the honours classification will be based solely on all credits at Credit Level 6.

19.4 Performance in work for which an award of credit for prior learning has been made is not taken into account in the calculation of the final award. See section 22 for rules related to credit for prior learning.

19.5 Where the final result of the award classification calculation creates a mark of 0.5% or greater this will be rounded up to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.5% is rounded to 70%; 59.5% to 60%; and so on). Where the calculation creates a mark below 0.5% this will be rounded down to the next full percentage point (e.g. 69.4% is rounded to 69%; 59.4% to 59%; and so on). For the purposes of rounding up or down, only the first decimal place is used.

20.0 Provision for exit awards

20.1 Programmes must make provision for exit awards at intermediate stages, for which clear learning outcomes must be stated and laid out in programme specifications approved by The Open University in the validation process.

20.2 Where a student leaves a partner Institution with an exit award they may reapply at a later date to upgrade to a higher award on the same programme, if it is still offered by the partner institution.

20.3 A student who has withdrawn from a programme or has exhausted all assessment attempts (as outline in sections 17.3-17.5.2 above) will automatically be considered for an exit award where sufficient credit has been accrued.

21.0 Posthumous and Aegrotat awards

21.1 Should a student be prevented by illness, or other circumstances, from completing the final assessed component of the programme, the board of examiners, having considered the relevant evidence (including medical certification) may make a recommendation that an Aegrotat award be made. Such exceptions are limited to students who are permanently unable to continue their studies and are registered for the final module that would complete a qualification, and have been assessed on at least part of the module. The board must be satisfied that the student's prior performance shows beyond reasonable doubt that they would have passed but for the illness, or other circumstances.

21.2 Posthumous awards are permitted for all programmes. The classification for such awards is based on past performance and aligned to the closest exit award (which may include a classification). Recommended to The Open University's Module Results Approval and Qualifications Classification Panel (MRAQCP) for approval.

22.0 Recognition of prior learning

22.1 Students who are able to demonstrate that they have already fulfilled some of the learning outcomes of the programme by means other than attendance on the planned programme, and will be able, by completing the remaining requirements,

to fulfil the learning outcomes of the programme and attain the standard required for the award, may be admitted with advanced standing, thus exempting them from some modules or stages of the programme.

If the student's prior learning is not certificated, the partner institution itself will assess the student's learning directly, either by requiring the applicant to take the normal progression assessments of the programme or by some other appropriate form of assessment. This will be laid out in the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy and procedure as approved by OU at Institutional approval or review.

22.2 A student admitted on the basis of uncertificated learning and experience or through prior certified learning is subject to the same principles of admission as all other students on that programme. Subject to the requirements of any Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements the partner institution has discretion to admit a student with exemption from certain elements of the programme or with specific credit.

22.3 A student may be awarded recognition for prior learning (certified, experiential or uncertified), towards the requirements of a named award up two-thirds* of the total credit requirements for that award.

22.4 Recognition for prior learning (certified, experiential or uncertified) is not permitted at level 6 of a Bachelor's Degree or for the thesis/dissertation module, where students are expected to complete 120 credits in order to gain the award.

22.5 Recognition for prior learning (certified, experiential or uncertified) is not permitted for the thesis/dissertation module on a PG programme.

22.6 The Partner Institution will be satisfied that an individual applicant has fulfilled some of the progression and assessment requirements of the programme by means other than attendance on the planned programme, and will be able by completing the remaining requirements to fulfil the learning outcomes of the programme and attain the standard required for the award, that student may be admitted to an appropriate point in the programme.

22.7 DIRECT ENTRY VIA STAGE EXEMPTION (exemption to stage of a programme without award of OU credit)

22.7.1 The RPL policy allows for candidates to enter stage 2 or stage 3 of an undergraduate qualification on the basis of completion of an appropriate certificated qualification from a recognised UK HE programme of study.

22.7.2 With stage exemption of this kind, it will be recorded on the student's transcript that stage exemption was awarded, but credit for the stage(s) from which the student was exempted would not be transferred to OU validated awards.

**two-thirds of RPL is only permitted for full, three-year bachelor's degrees (360 credits) or full Masters degrees (a minimum of 180 credits) and not sub-awards, where the usual maximum is 50%.*

E. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

23.0 Academic misconduct is defined as any improper activity or behaviour by a student which may give that student, or another student, an unpermitted academic advantage in a summative assessment. In investigating and dealing with cases of suspected misconduct, partner institutions will follow the policies and processes approved at Institutional approval or review. Any penalties arising from academic misconduct will be levied in line with the AMBeR Tariff (see section 23.4 below).

23.1 The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of academic misconduct which will be considered under these Regulations:

23.1.1 Plagiarism: representing another person's work or ideas as one's own, for example by failing to follow convention in acknowledging sources, use of quotation marks, etc. This includes the unauthorised use of one student's work by another student and the commissioning, purchase and submission of a piece of work, in part or whole, as the student's own.

Note: Where a student has an acknowledged learning disability, a proof-reader may be used to ensure that the student's meaning is not misunderstood as a result of the quality and standard of writing, unless a partner institution policy specifically prohibits this. Where permitted, a proof-reader may identify spelling and basic grammatical errors. Inaccuracies in academic content should not be corrected nor should the structure of the piece of work be changed.

23.1.2 Collusion: cooperation in order to gain an unpermitted advantage. This may occur where students have consciously colluded on a piece of work, in part or whole, and passed it off as their own individual efforts or where one student has authorised another to use their work, in part or whole, and to submit it as their own.

Note: legitimate input from tutors or approved readers or scribes is not considered to be collusion.

23.1.3 Misconduct in examinations (including in-class tests).

23.1.4 Processes for dealing with Academic misconduct and the penalties

Bishop Auckland College Academic Misconduct Policy has been approved by the Open University. The Policy provides specific guidance on the principles and management of cases of academic misconduct. For further details, please click here.

F. EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

24.0 The Open University recognises that students may suffer from a sudden illness, or other serious and unforeseen event or set of circumstances, which adversely affects their ability to complete an assessment, or the results they obtain for an assessment. In such cases the partner institution's extenuating circumstances procedures will be applied, as approved in institutional review.

24.1 A student who is prevented from attending or completing a formal assessment component or who feels that their performance would be (or has been) seriously impaired by extenuating circumstances, may submit a deferral request. Further information is available from the partner institution.

Bishop Auckland College Extenuating Circumstances Policy has been approved by the Open University. The Policy provides specific guidance on the process and principles of the management of extenuating circumstances. For further details, please click here

24.2 Students are responsible for ensuring that the partner institution is notified of any extenuating circumstances at the time they occur and for supplying supporting documentation by the published deadline.

24.3 If a student is unable to attend an examination or other assessment event because of extenuating circumstances, they must inform the Partner institution as soon as possible and provide supporting evidence before published deadlines or within 7 calendar days, whichever is sooner. If a student cannot submit evidence by published deadlines, they must submit details of the extenuating circumstances with an indication that evidence will be submitted within 7 calendar days.

24.4 Medical evidence submitted in support of a claim for extenuating circumstances should be provided by a qualified medical practitioner.

24.5 The partner institution will verify the authenticity of any evidence submitted.

24.6 Upon receipt of recommendations from the panel or body responsible for investigating extenuating circumstances, the Board of Examiners, or its subsidiary

board, will decide whether to:

(a) provide a student with the opportunity to take the affected assessment(s) as if for the first time, allowing them to be given the full marks achieved for the examination or assessment, rather than imposing a cap;
(b) waive late submission penalties;
(c) determine that there is sufficient evidence of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes from other pieces of assessment in the module(s) for an overall mark to be derived;
(d) note the accepted extenuation for the module(s) and recommend that it is taken into account at the point of award and classification.

24.7 The Board of Examiners, depending on the circumstances, may exercise discretion in deciding on the particular form any reassessment should take. Options are a viva voce examination, additional assessment tasks designed to show whether the student has satisfied the programme learning outcomes, review of previous work, or normal assessment at the next available opportunity. The student will not be put in a position of unfair advantage or disadvantage: the aim will be to enable the student to be assessed on equal terms with their cohort.

24.8 If a student fails, without good cause, to provide the responsible body with information about extenuating circumstances within the timescales specified in the partner institution policy, the responsible body has authority to reject the request on those grounds.

G. BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

25.0 Appointment of Boards of Examiners

25.1 For every programme (or subject area in a Liberal Arts or Combined Studies programme) leading to a validated award of The Open University there will be a Board of Examiners whose constitution (including a note of those members constituting a quorum) and terms of reference will have been approved by The Open University as part of the Institutional approval and review process.

25.2 In the case of large modular programmes, there may be subsidiary boards with designated responsibility for a cognate group of units or subjects. Where this is the case, the relative responsibilities, powers and terms of reference of the different boards will have been approved by The Open University (as part of the Institutional approval and review process).

25.3 External Examiners are appointed by, and report to The Open University. The terms under which they engage with the partner institution and the programmes to which they are appointed are those determined by The Open University.

26.0 Membership of Boards of Examiners

26.1 The Academic Board (or equivalent body) of the partner institution is required to agree the membership of Boards of Examiners, at the start of each academic year.

26.2 All External Examiner(s) for the programme/subject area will be members of the board. Where institutions operate a tiered board structure/subsidiary boards and have many External Examiners appointed, the Chief External Examiner(s) only will be required to be members of the board where recommendations for awards to The Open University's Module Results Approval and Qualifications Classification Panel (MRAQCP) are made.

26.3 Under no circumstances may a student of a partner institution of The Open University or student studying for an award of The Open University may be a member of, or attend, a Board of Examiners. A person who is otherwise qualified to be an internal examiner for a programme, for example as a member of academic staff or as an approved External Examiner, and is coincidentally registered as a student on another programme either at the same institution or elsewhere, will not be disqualified from carrying out normal examining commitments.

26.4 The Chair of the Board of Examiners will be a senior member of staff, commonly a Head of Department, Dean of Faculty or their nominee, and not directly involved in the delivery of the programme/subject area or the assessment of students in the programme or subject area considered by the Board of Examiners.

26.5 The Registrar (or equivalent) or a nominee at the partner institution – acting with the authority of the Academic Board – should normally be appointed as Secretary to the Board of Examiners.

26.6 A member of The Open University staff must be present at any Examination Board where final decisions on recommendations for an Open University award is made and where decisions about progression are made. Although not normal practice The Open University reserves the right to Chair the Board of Examiners or any subsidiary boards.

The Bishop Auckland College Terms of Reference for Higher Education Assessment Boards has been approved by the Open University. For further details, please click here.

27.0 Authority of Boards of Examiners

27.1 The Board of Examiners is authorised to determine the progression of students in accordance with these academic regulations and to recommend progression or the conferment of validated awards of The Open University.

27.2 All progression and award recommendations are made to The Open University's Module Results Approval and Qualifications Classification Panel (MRAQCP) for them to ratify. The Panel is responsible for approving recommendations for module results and the award and Classification of qualifications (including partner institutions).

27.3 All decisions related to a student's progression, final results, and awards, will be approved by a properly constituted Board of Examiners.

27.4 No other body has authority to recommend conferment of an award or progression, nor to amend the decision of an approved and properly constituted Board of Examiners acting within its terms of reference and in accordance with the regulations for the programme of study. A Board of Examiners may, however, be required to review a decision, or may have that decision annulled under the Appeals procedure.

28.0 Subsidiary Boards of Examiners

28.1 Any subsidiary board of examiners (with designated responsibility for a cognate group of units or subjects) will include all approved subject-based or cognate group External Examiners.

28.2 The rights and duties of External Examiners on subsidiary boards are the same as those of External Examiners on the parent board except that the subsidiary board of examiners only makes recommendations to the parent board.

28.3 Subsidiary boards will exercise responsibility for assessing students' grades but will not make decisions on progression or awards. These will remain the responsibility of the parent Board of Examiners.

28.4 Once a subsidiary board has reviewed marks or grades for a student a recommendation is made to the parent board over these grades. However, the parent board retains the authority to reach its own conclusion on the overall performance and grading of each student. While a subsidiary board will be charged with recommending arrangements for reassessment of a failed student, only the parent board – having reviewed the failed assessment component and determined a student's right to retrieve – can approve the reassessment arrangements.

29.0 Conditions of conferment by The Open University

29.1 The OU may approve conferment of a validated award when the following conditions are satisfied:

(a) The student has been a registered student at a partner institution at the time of the assessment for an award and the appropriate fee to The Open University has been paid by the institution.
(b) Details of the student's full name, full postal address, email address, telephone numbers, date of birth, gender, programme of study, award and all required information have been forwarded to The Open University.
(c) The institution at which the student has been registered has confirmed that the student has completed a programme of study approved by The Open University as leading to the award being recommended.
(d) The award has been recommended by a Board of Examiners convened, constituted and acting under regulations approved by The Open University and including all members appointed by The Open University as External Examiners for the programme.
(e) The recommendation of the award has been signed by the Chair of the Board of Examiners, the External Examiners and The Open University's representative at the Board of Examiners, confirming that the assessments have been carried out in accordance with the requirements of The Open University and that the recommendations have received the written approval of the External Examiners.

H. ACADEMIC APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

30.0 Grounds for appeal

30.1 There shall be no appeal against an assessment result determined in accordance with paragraph 15.1 above, except on the grounds that the approved policy for moderation has not been followed.

30.2 A student may appeal against a decision of a Board of Examiners made under section G 27 and 28 above, only if one or more of the following grounds apply:

(a) Where the student provides written evidence in support of a claim that performance in the assessment was adversely affected by extenuating

circumstances which the student was unable or, for valid reasons, unwilling to divulge before the Board of Examiners reached its decision; or

(b) Where there is prima facie evidence, whether provided by the student or otherwise, that:

(i) there has been a material administrative error; or

(ii) the examinations or other assessments were not conducted in accordance with the regulations for the programme and/or special arrangements formally agreed; or

(iii) some other material irregularity relevant to the Board of Examiner's decision has occurred.

30.3 Disagreement with the academic judgement of a Board of Examiners cannot constitute grounds for an appeal.

30.4 An appeal must be made within the time limits and in the manner prescribed in the partner institution's approved appeals procedure set out in paragraph 32 below.

30.5 A formal complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with a service provided or the lack of a service. It must relate to services that students were led to believe would be provided. Students should refer to procedures set out in paragraph 31 below.

30.6 Where a student raises a matter of concern that does not meet the grounds for appeal highlighted above, the matter may be dealt with as a formal complaint. In the event that a complaint is upheld, where there is no right of appeal, an assessment result or a decision of a Board of Examiners cannot be changed.

31.0 Academic Appeals and Complaints procedures

The Bishop Auckland College Higher Academic Appeals Policy has been approved by the Open University. The Policy provides specific guidance on the principles and management of the academic appeals process for higher education students at the College. For further details on Academic Appeals, please click here. A Student version of the Academic Appeals Procedure can be found here.

For information on Customer Complaints, please click here.

32.0 Action following appeal procedures

32.1 The student will be sent a written statement setting out the decision that has been made and the reasons for reaching that decision, together with any actions required by the student or the partner institution to follow up and implement that decision. Partner institutions will align to Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) timelines. The written statement will also include details of any further right of appeal available to the student if they remain dissatisfied with the final outcome of the institution's procedures. This will include, where applicable, the right to appeal to The Open University under paragraph 33 below.

33.0 Appeals to The Open University

33.1 There shall be a final right of appeal to The Open University against a decision of a Board of Examiners only if the appeal is against a decision related to either:

(a) progression from one stage to another of the programme to the next; or
(b) a final award;

and both of the following criteria are met:

(a) all appropriate internal procedures at the partner institution have been exhausted;
(b) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the partner institution's internal procedures and regulations for dealing with appeals were not implemented correctly or fairly.

The procedure for appealing to The Open University is set out in The Open University Handbook for Validated Awards which students should have access to through the partner institution.

I. TRANSCRIPTS, DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENTS AND CERTIFICATES

34.0 Transcript

34.1 The transcript is produced by the partner institution and provides a comprehensible verifiable record of a student's learning. The standard content of a transcript is listed in Appendix 1 of these Regulations.

34.2 The transcript is issued to the student after each stage of their programme is completed.

34.3 If a student has completed only a part of a programme of study, without fulfilling the full requirements for an award, a transcript is issued.

35.0 Diploma supplement

35.1 The diploma supplement is issued to a student solely on the successful completion of a qualification.

35.2 The diploma supplement is produced by the partner institution and provides students who have completed an Open University validated award with a formal, verifiable and comprehensive record of learning and achievement. The standard content of a diploma supplement are set out in Appendix 2 to these Regulations.

36.0 Certificates

36.1 The Open University issues a certificate for each conferred award. The standard content of a Certificate for a validated award is set out in Appendix 3 to these Regulations.

36.2 Students awarded any qualification of The Open University, will be issued with a certificate in respect of that qualification in the name held in formal records at the point when the qualification is conferred. A certificate will not be amended or reissued in a different name if a change of name is notified after the date the qualification is conferred, except in the case of an error by The Open University in recording personal details, or if a valid request is made under the Gender Recognition Act 2004. A duplicate certificate will be issued in the same name as the original certificate (unless amended as above), even if a change of name may subsequently have been notified.

Appendix 1

Content of transcripts

Partner institutions will present the information in the format that they consider to be most appropriate. The minimum requirements for the content of transcripts of The Open University validated awards are:

(a) Student details

(b) Details of the qualification, including any professional, statutory or regulatory body accreditation or recognition.

(c) Up-to-date details of learning and achievement, i.e. modules or units studied, credits awarded, marks or grades achieved and the date and year in which credits were awarded.

(d) Up-to-date details of non-completion, including the number of attempts taken to complete a module.

(e) Other types of learning, e.g. study abroad, work placement and work experience, accreditation of prior certificated and experiential learning, or accreditation of key skills.

Appendix 2

Outline structure for the diploma supplement

The following information will be given in the diploma supplement:

1 Information identifying the holder of the qualification
1.1 Family name(s)
1.2 Given name(s)
1.3 Date of birth (day/month/year)
1.4 Student identification number or code (if available)

2 Information identifying the qualification
2.1 Name of qualification and (if applicable) title conferred (in original language)
2.2 Main field(s) of study for the qualification
2.3 Name and status of awarding institution (in original language)
2.4 Name, address and status of institution (if different from 2.3) delivering studies
2.4a Principal location of study (if different from 2.4 above)
2.5 Language(s) of instruction/examination

3 Information on the level of the qualification
3.1 Level of qualification
3.2 Official length of programme
3.3 Access requirements(s)

4 Information on the contents and results gained
4.1 Mode of study
4.2 Programme requirements
4.3 Programme details (e.g. modules or units studied) and the individual grades/marks/credits obtained
4.4 Grading scheme and, if available, grade distribution guidance
4.5 Overall classification of the qualification (in original language)

5 Information on the function of the qualification
5.1 Access to further study
5.2 Professional status (if applicable)

6 Additional information
6.1 Additional information
6.2 Further information sources

7 Certification of the supplement
7.1 Date
7.2 Signature of official certifying the diploma supplement
7.3 Capacity
7.4 Official stamp or seal of partner institution

8 Information on the higher education system

For this field, Partner institutions will adopt the standard description adopted by the rest of The Open University.

Appendix 3

Content of certificates

A validated award certificate conferred under the Charter of The Open University records:

(a) the name of the Partner institution at which the student has been registered, together with the name of any other institution sharing responsibility for the student's programme of study
(b) the student's full name as given on the list of recommendations submitted to The Open University by the institution at which the student was registered. For gender reassignment, The Open University will require proof of the new identity before a new certificate is issued.
(c) the award
(d) the title of the programme, as approved by The Open University
(e) the language of instruction and assessment, where this is not English
(f) an approved endorsement, where appropriate, that the programme of study was in sandwich mode
(g) the date the award was conferred.

The Open University validated award certificates conform with specific design requirements of The Open University.

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