



Academic Regulations for the Award of Foundation Degrees

Section A Regulatory Principles Governing the Award of Foundation Degree

2022/2023 Edition

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A1 Principles Underpinning the Regulations

A1.1 The Regulations must be:

- a. clearly understood by students and other stakeholders;
- b. reflect the requirements and expectations of the Office for Students (OfS) and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA);
- c. ensure objectivity through the involvement of suitably qualified independent people in the processes of awarding and of assessment.

A1.2 These principles reflect the commitment of the Corporation of the College to place students at the centre of the higher education process. Through the annual review process students, and other foundation degree stakeholders, are able to inform the development of the Regulations to ensure that they are understandable, comprehensive, fair, and satisfy the requirements of the QAA and relevant Professional Statutory & Regulatory Body accreditation (PSRBs).

A2 Awarding Powers

A2.1 The Corporation of New College Durham (the College) was granted approval to award Foundation Degrees by Privy Council on 28 July 2011. The power became effective from 1st August 2011. This was renewed on 31 August 2017 for a further six years.

A2.2 College validated awards for Foundation Degrees are conferred through the exercise of this power.

A2.3 The Corporation of New College Durham is the duly constituted body with responsibility for ensuring that the power to award is exercised in accordance with the grant and in line with the requirements and expectations of the OfS and QAA . Responsibility for the exercise of its powers is by and through the College Principal and Chief Executive and delegated authorised responsible officers. In carrying out these functions the Principal is required to report back to the Corporation on the exercise of these powers on a regular basis.

Where these Regulations grant powers or impose responsibilities upon the College and upon the College Principal, such powers and responsibilities may be discharged through a duly authorised delegated body or individual.

A2.4 College validated awards are defined with reference to the Framework for Higher Education (HE) qualifications.

- A2.5 The Qualifications and Credit Framework provides a set of descriptors setting out generic learning outcomes and skills expected of holders of a Foundation Degree qualification. Validated awards will be required to conform to these descriptors.

A3 Academic Regulations for the Award of Foundation Degree

- A3.1 The Principal is responsible for the approval of the New College Durham Academic Regulations for the Award of Foundation Degrees (the Regulations). This process is completed through consultation with Academic Board. The approval, validation, modification, and review of all Foundation Degrees offered by the College are governed by these Regulations.
- A3.2 The Regulations are supplemented by a series of procedures and should be read in conjunction with them.
- A3.3 The Regulations are subject to annual review. The annual review is informed by observations from students, academic staff, external examiners, professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, and other stakeholders with a direct interest in the regulatory framework. Any variation of the Regulations cannot operate retrospectively and must be approved through the College published procedure.
- A3.4 The Regulations are intended to be written in a way which makes them accessible to students, and all students should be made aware of the content, status and location of the Regulations when they commence their foundation degree studies.

A4 Authority for Approval, Review, and Termination of Awards

- A4.1 The responsibility for undertaking the authority for approval, review and termination of awards is carried out in accordance with the published procedure.
- A4.2 In carrying out these functions, regular reports are provided via the published schedules incorporating a review of approval and review activities that has taken place since the previous report. Reports will be provided to Academic Board through the appropriate management or committee structure, for consideration. The report contains a review of the approval and review activity that has taken place during the previous academic year.
- A4.3 The Principal is responsible for approving all new Qualification Aims of the College. The College may grant the following degree designations: -

- a. New College Durham Higher Education Certificate of Achievement (NCDHECA)
- b. Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)
- c. Foundation Degree Arts (FdA)
- d. Foundation Degree Education (FdEd)
- e. Foundation Degree Engineering (FdEng)
- f. Foundation Degree Science (FdSc)

A4.4 The College defines the awards by reference to the credits achieved and the level at which they have been achieved.

- a. A student who commenced their studies after 25 July 2017, will be eligible to receive a Certificate of Higher Education, having successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4.
- b. A student who commenced their studies prior to 25 July 2017 will be eligible to receive a New College Durham Higher Education Certificate of Achievement having successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4.
- c. A student will be eligible to receive a Foundation Degree having successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4, and 120 credits at Level 5.

N.B. Please also refer to Section C8 Compensation of Modules

- A4.5 A title must be given to each approved programme leading to the award of foundation degree. The title must be that approved in accordance with the College's validation process and may not be changed without formal approval by the College. The title must be simple and accurate.
- A4.6 The title should accord, as a description of programme content, 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.
- A4.7 The College's recommended practice for the allocation of programme titles is that normally single subject titles should be used. However, it is permissible to have a title that connects two discipline subject areas together using 'and' or 'with'. Titles should be such that each separate award is clearly distinguishable from other validated awards of the College. Each cognate subject identified in an award title is clearly identifiable within an award structure. (Refer Sections B3.6 and B3.7)
- A4.8 The Principal is responsible for final approval of all new title awards of the College, validated under these Regulations and reporting through the appropriate structure.

- A4.9 An award will be subject to periodic review one year before its re-validation date.
- A4.10 Extensions to this period of approval will only be considered with a strong rationale and must be approved in accordance with the published procedure.
- A4.11 Delivery of a new award may commence only when all conditions have been met to the satisfaction of the Chair of the Validation Panel and the programme has been formally approved by the Principal as a validated award. Until formal confirmation has been granted a proposed new programme may only be promoted by the College with the words “This programme is pending subject to *New College Durham Validation*” immediately following the title of the proposed award wherever and whenever details of the proposed programme are published.
- A4.12 Any change to an award title must be made in accordance with the published procedure. The proposed alternative title must be supported by a rationale that explains why the new title is considered necessary and appropriate to the award.
- A4.13 Information detailing the approved structure, and supplementary modifications to that structure, are required to be held by the College in perpetuity.

A5 Awards Withdrawn from the College Portfolio

- A5.1 Under certain circumstances, a decision to withdraw an approved College award may be taken, and it is the responsibility of the Principal to approve or reject such a decision. A validated award can only be terminated through a determination of the HE Strategic Approval Panel.
- A5.2 When an award ceases to recruit students, the School will take appropriate action to ensure that:
- a. standards are maintained for any students remaining on the award;
 - b. students are transferred to a suitable alternative award subject to their individual acceptance of these arrangements.

- A5.3 Where a validated award has not recruited students for a period of two consecutive academic years the award will normally be treated as having no further market value and the College will take steps to terminate the award.
- A5.4 Under these Regulations it is the responsibility of the Heads of School to monitor recruitment to validated awards of the College for this purpose, and to advise the Principal of any award which falls within regulation A5.3.
- A5.5 Where a validated award is to be terminated for any other reason than A5.3, permission to terminate can only be granted by the Principal. Permission will only be granted in this circumstance, where the interests of any students enrolled on the programme have been protected. In normal circumstances this will mean that appropriate teach out arrangements have been put in place to allow existing students to be able to complete their programme of study.

A6 Award Framework

- A6.1 The College adopts a credit-based system for the validated awards of foundation degree and it defines these awards primarily in terms of the level and volume of credit required for each.
- A6.2 The level of credit assigned must be determined taking account of:
- a. the range of learning outcomes being accredited;
 - b. qualification descriptors as set out in the relevant national qualifications framework for an award; and,
 - c. any UK national benchmarks established for the subject area in question.
- A6.3 The assignment of credit to learning must conform to the following principles:
- a. credit is allocated to a module and its learning outcomes assessed. An individual student will achieve that credit by achieving those learning outcomes.
 - b. credit can only be assigned on the evidence of assessed learning. Where no assessment takes place or that assessment has neither been appropriately conducted nor verified, credit cannot be assigned.

- c. the number of credit points assigned is independent of the standard of the pass. Students achieving higher standards cannot be allocated additional credit points. The higher standard should be reflected in the mark given and classification of the pass.
- d. for the same credits to be assigned to the same learning programme across time, place and mode of learning, the quality assurance processes in place must ensure consistency of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

- A6.4 The main determinant for the volume of credit is notional learning. This is defined as the reasonable measure of the time it would take a student, adequately supported, to achieve the learning outcomes of the activity.
- A6.5 Total notional student learning time, as indicated in the award definitive documentation, includes all activities required to achieve the learning outcomes of a programme, including assessment and independent learning.
- A6.6 Notional learning time for a 'standard' full-time academic year is 1200 hours at undergraduate level. This notional learning time is based upon the allocation of 10 learning hours for a single credit.
- A6.7 Delivery of an award may be by full time attendance at the College or part time attendance at the College.

A7 Requirements for Awards

- A7.1 To obtain an award a student must successfully achieve the requisite number of credits at each level, as identified in section A4.4.
- A7.2 In addition, a student may be required to fulfil other academic commitments as specified in the award specific regulations.
- A7.3 A student may choose to withdraw from the College prior to completion of their studies. If they have successfully met the conditions for a conditional exit Certificate of Higher Education, they will be awarded one at the next meeting of the Progression and Award Board (PAB).
- A7.4 A student who, by completion of programme requirements has received, or is eligible to receive, an award, may not submit additional work for assessment for the purpose of improving an award.

- A7.5 Credits gained for a module may be counted towards only one named Foundation degree or towards a conditional exit award within the programme culminating in that final named foundation degree award.

A8 Award Classifications

- A8.1 A Foundation Degree is awarded for the achievement of the required number of credits, either outright or by compensation in accordance with the regulations in section A4.4. Where a failure in any module has been compensated, the module mark will be adjusted to the higher mark of 40%.

This mark will be used for the calculation of the final award where applicable. The award is calculated on the basis of marks obtained from modules delivered and assessed by New College Durham. The overall grade of a Foundation Degree is determined on the basis of the most favourable outcome to the student by using the following methods:

- a. the weighted average of the aggregated overall marks for best 100 module credits at Level 5 and the best 20 module credits at Level 4; or,
- b. the weighted average of the aggregated overall marks of all awarded credits at Level 5.
 - i. Foundation Degree with Distinction* is awarded to students who have demonstrated a defined profile of at least 70%.
 - ii. Foundation Degree with Distinction is awarded to students who have demonstrated a defined profile of 60% and no more than 69%.
 - iii. Foundation Degree with Merit is awarded to students who have demonstrated a defined profile of 50% and no more than 59%.
 - iv. Students who have demonstrated a defined profile of no less than 40% and no more than 49% will be awarded a Foundation Degree at pass level.

- A8.2 Credits imported by the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) are not used in calculating the award.

A9 Foundation Degree Award Titles, Parchments and Records

- A9.1 A student who successfully achieves an award will receive a parchment issued by the College as formal evidence of the achievement of the award.
- A9.2 A replacement parchment will only be issued by the College following a personal request in writing from the holder of the award, who will be required to provide an explanation for the request. Where the request is granted a charge for the replacement parchment will normally be made.
- A9.3 Students who successfully achieve an award of foundation degree will be invited to attend the next following graduation ceremony held by the College.
- A9.4 All students achieving the award of foundation degree will have their names and the full details of their award entered onto the Degree Register. The degree register will be the definitive document of record held by the College in relation to College awards.
- A9.5 In addition to the degree parchment students will receive a transcript and a diploma supplement.
- A9.6 Upon completing each level of their award, students will receive a record of their academic progress to date.
- A9.7 Students who do not complete a programme of study on which they are enrolled leading to the award of foundation degree but who have successfully achieved 120 Level 4 credits will be entitled to obtain a Certificate of Higher Education in the subject they have been studying.

A10 Revocation of Awards

- A10.1 The College may, by following the published procedure, revoke an award and all privileges and rights associated with that award, where it is established that a person who has followed a programme of study has obtained an award by fraud or deception or where other circumstances come to light after the award is made which if known at the time, would have meant that the award would not have been made.
- A10.2 Where such fraud or deception is alleged, a recommendation for revocation of award must be made to the Principal by the Chair of the relevant Progression and Award Board.

A10.3 If a decision to revoke the award is made, a notice of revocation will be issued. The individual concerned may appeal this decision via the College's Academic Appeals Procedure.

A11 Quality Assurance

A11.1 The assurance of the academic quality and standards of the validated awards of New College Durham is essential to ensure public confidence in the integrity of the awards and to protect the interests of its students and graduates. The College will take any action it considers necessary under the powers granted to it by Privy Council to protect the quality and standards of its validated awards.

A11.2 In the exercise of its awarding powers the College is subject to the requirements and expectations of UK higher education, as represented by the Office for Students (OfS) and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). QAA publishes a UK Code of Practice for Higher Education, which provides a framework for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, national frameworks for higher education qualifications, subject benchmark statements and a range of associated guidelines. Taken together, the QAA publications represent a suite of external reference points against which all higher education programmes leading to an award are referenced.

A11.3 The College requires those of its Schools offering validated awards to demonstrate a full knowledge and understanding of these reference points and to take account of them in their quality assurance arrangements, programme submissions and delivery. Details of the Code can be accessed at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>.