

## UNIVERSITY OF YORK

### TEACHING COMMITTEE

#### Generic qualification descriptors for early exit awards

1. A key feature of the University's new undergraduate and graduate modular scheme is the opportunity for students who leave their programme early to receive 'early exit' awards in recognition of their achievements. Under the new modular scheme, the following generic qualifications can be awarded:
  - Certificate of Higher Education
  - Diploma of Higher Education
  - Ordinary Degree
  - Graduate Certificate.
2. These generic qualifications will only be recorded as having been passed (no classification or distinction in levels of achievement will be attached to such awards).
3. In all cases academic transcripts for students will provide additional information about the circumstances and details of results for the award of the qualification.
4. As these are generic University awards, it is not necessary for departments to write programme learning outcomes (unless they wish their early exit awards to be named).<sup>1</sup>
5. It is, however, necessary for the University to have clear credit volume and level requirements for early exit awards<sup>2</sup> and approved generic learning outcomes.
6. All of the University's programmes are already informed by the FHEQ<sup>3</sup> descriptors, which are both a statement of learning outcomes and a statement of the wider abilities that a typical student could be expected to have developed. These form the basis for the generic descriptors (see Appendix).

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<sup>1</sup> Where departments wish to introduce specific, named exit points (for example Certificate of Higher Education *in Geography*), programme learning outcomes must be specified. Also, if a Certificate of HE, Diploma of HE or Graduate Certificate is an *intended* award it will require specific programme learning outcomes. Ordinary Degrees cannot be named awards.

<sup>2</sup> See the Award Requirements in the *Rules of Assessment and Award*

<http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/aso/teach/modular/assessandaward.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*

## **Appendix**

### **Learning outcomes for the generic early exit qualifications of Certificate of Higher Education, Diploma of Higher Education, Ordinary Degree and Graduate Certificate**

#### **Certificate of Higher Education (C/4 level)**

A student who receives a generic Certificate of Higher Education will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study
- demonstrate an ability to present, evaluate, and interpret data/evidence, to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study
- evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and /or work
- communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments
- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment
- undertake employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

#### **Diploma of Higher Education (I/5 level)**

A student who receives a generic Diploma of Higher Education will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed
- demonstrate an ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context
- demonstrate knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in their subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
- demonstrate an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge
- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis
- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively
- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations
- undertake employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility and decision-making.

## Ordinary Degree and Graduate Certificate (H/6 level)

The difference between an Honours degree and an Ordinary Degree and Graduate Certificate under the new scheme (and in the sector) is the volume of credit achieved not the level: an Honours degree is expected to include at least 100 credits of Honours-level material in contrast to an Ordinary Degree which is expected to include at least 60 credits of Honours-level material and a Graduate Certificate which is expected to include at least 40 credits of Honours-level material. In recognition of this lower volume of Honours-level credit, a student who receives an Ordinary Degree or generic Graduate Certificate will be able to do most (but not necessarily all) of the following:

- demonstrate a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline
- demonstrate an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline
- demonstrate conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to devise and sustain arguments, and /or solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline; and
  - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline
- demonstrate an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge
- manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (e.g. referee articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline)
- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carryout projects
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – or identify a range of solutions – to a problem
- communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences
- undertake employment requiring:
  - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts
  - the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.