

University of York

Undergraduate Modular Scheme: Framework for Programme Design

This document sets out the requirements and parameters of the undergraduate modular scheme for those involved in programme design and review.¹

The scheme applies to all undergraduate programmes commencing in or after academic year 2010/11.

This document should be read in conjunction with the [Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback](#)

CONTENTS

Section A	Introduction
Section B	Overview of the modular scheme
Section C	Award requirements
Section D	Stage requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Credit volume and levels• Assessment periods
Section E	Module requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Module assessment and marks• Permitted module sizes and shapes (the 'toolkit')• Electives

Appendices

Appendix I	Glossary
Appendix II	Some possible approaches to consider when reviewing and developing main/subsidiary combined degrees
Appendix III	Study abroad and work placements
Appendix IV	Programme titles
Appendix V	Assessment periods: exceptional cases
Appendix VI	Common principles to enable progression decisions to be made by the end of each stage
Appendix VII	Common assessment periods: frequently asked questions
Appendix VIII	Modules designated as non-compensatable and/or for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided
Appendix IX	Some notes on student workload and illustrative templates for programme design
Appendix X	Foundation degrees

¹ As approved by Senate and University Teaching Committee (Senate M07/07 refers; UTC M07/08 and M08/10 refer).

A. INTRODUCTION

1. This document sets out the award, stage and module requirements of the undergraduate modular scheme. **It applies to all programmes commencing in or after academic year 2010/11.**
2. Details of the progression, reassessment and degree classification rules relating to undergraduate programmes from 2010/11 are available in the [Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback](#)
3. The [programme specification template](#) provides additional guidance and prompts to programme designers, as well as providing clear statements for students about a programme's structure and intended learning outcomes.

Underlined terms are defined in **Appendix I.**

B. OVERVIEW OF THE MODULAR SCHEME

4. The University operates a modular scheme for taught programmes. The modular scheme requires academic programmes to comprise of modules, which are allocated a certain credit value based on notional student workload, and are assigned to levels based on their academic content and outcomes. To be eligible for an award of the University of York a student must undertake an approved programme of study, obtain a specified number of credits (at a specified level(s)), and meet any other requirements of the award as specified in the Award Regulations, programme specification and other University regulations (e.g. payment of fees). Credit will be awarded upon passing a module's assessment(s). Some credit may be awarded where failure has been compensated by achievement in other modules. Some opportunities for reassessment are available.
5. A student must satisfy the requirements for each stage of his/her programme (a stage is equivalent to a year's full-time study) before progressing to the next stage. If a student does not meet the stage requirements s/he will be required to leave the University; s/he may be eligible for a lower volume award. Students undertaking an integrated masters who do not meet the stage requirements, may be eligible to transfer to the related bachelors programme. Students who undertake study abroad or a work placement as 'additional' credit (see **Appendix III**) and do not achieve that credit, will transfer to the relevant variant of the programme.
6. Exceptions to the Award Regulations are permitted to meet non-negotiable requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). Exceptions require University Teaching Committee approval.
7. Individual student cases of mitigating circumstances are dealt with by the appropriate departmental and University committees.

C. AWARD REQUIREMENTS

8. A degree will only be awarded on the basis of credits accumulated as part of an approved programme of study. However, a student may be eligible for a lower volume award than the award for which they are registered, provided that they have met the requirements. Such awards will usually be generic University awards (for example, Ordinary degree and Certificate of Higher Education) and will only be recorded as having been passed.² See the University's [Generic qualification descriptors for early exit awards](#)
9. The University award requirements are:
Table 1

Award	Credit volume (minima) ^Ω	Credit levels	Electives	Combined degrees: credit distribution	
				Main/subsidiary (A with B)	EQ combinations (A and B)
Integrated Masters Degree	480	at least 120 credits at level 7 (M) (over stages 3 and 4)	80	Variation permitted between 360:120 and 310:170	240:240 regarded as the norm, but with variation permitted up to 290:190
Bachelors Degree with Honours	360	at least 100 credits at level 6 (H)	60	Variation permitted between 270:90 and 230:130	180:180 regarded as the norm, but with variation permitted up to 220:140
Ordinary Degree	300	at least 60 credits at level 6 (H) (over stages 2 and 3)	60	'Stage' parameters apply (where applicable)	
Foundation Degree **	240	at least 90 credits at level 5 (I) (or higher)	60		
Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)	240	at least 90 credits at level 5 (I) (or higher)	60		
Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	120	at least 90 credits at level 4 (C) (or higher)	40		
University Certificate *	60	60 credits at level 4 (C)	n/a		

^Ω Students may be awarded these qualifications with a higher credit volume (for example, where study abroad or work placements are undertaken as additional credit (see **Appendix III**) or further credit is required to accommodate PSRB practice requirements). Students who have successfully completed a Foundation Year (Stage 0) as part of their programme will have achieved an additional 120 credits at level 3/HE level 0.

** Not available as an early exit award.

* Only available as an early exit award for Lifelong Learning programmes.

10. Information about programme titles is provided in **Appendix IV**.

² Where departments wish to introduce specific, named exit points (for example, Certificate of Higher Education or Diploma *in Geography*) programme learning outcomes must be specified. Ordinary degrees cannot be named awards.

D. STAGE REQUIREMENTS

Credit volume and levels

11. Stages (equivalent to a full-time year) of programmes are structured as follows:

Table 2

Credit Volume		Electives	Combined degrees: credit distribution ^ψ	
Overall	per term (norm) ^π	Maximum credit volume ^φ	Main/subsidiary (A with B)	EQ combination (A and B)
120 ^Y	40	40	Variation permitted between 90:30 and 70:50. In stage 1 only a distribution of 60:60 is also possible.	60:60 regarded as the norm, but with variation up to 80:40

Y (i) in stages 1 and 2 only, combined degree programme specifications may permit additional optional credit to be studied, in order to meet later pre-requisite requirements. The overall limit for additional optional credit (for the whole programme) is 30 credits. These extra credits will be regarded as additional to the programme requirements and the module results will not contribute to progression or classification requirements. (ii) a stage may consist of a higher credit volume where a student has undertaken study abroad or a work placement as additional credit (see **Appendix III**) or further credit is required to accommodate PSRB practice requirements.

π See Table 4 – permitted module sizes and shapes

φ See overall programme parameters in the award requirements.

ψ See overall programme parameters in the award requirements.

12. In addition, each stage is subject to credit level requirements as follows:

Table 3

Stage	Credit level requirements ^Y
0 ³	Modules must be at level 3/HE level 0
1	Modules should usually be at level 4 (C). At least 90 credits-worth of modules must be at level 4 (C). A maximum of 30 credits below level 4 (C) is permitted in stage 1. These should usually be at level 3/HE level 0 but may, in the case of Languages for All, include a maximum of 20 credits below level 3/HE level 0, to allow the study of a language <i>ab initio</i> as part of a degree programme. Where this is permitted it must be defined in the Programme Specifications.
2	Modules should usually be at level 5 (I). At least 90 credits-worth of modules must be at level 5 (I).
3	Modules should usually be at level 6 (H). At least 100 credits-worth of modules must be at level 6 (H). A maximum of 20 credits at level 7 (M) is permitted in stage 3. If a bachelors programme includes an opportunity to undertake level 7 (M) credit this should not be compulsory (given that the module will be above the level of the award). It should be clear to students that the module(s) is at a higher level (with a higher pass mark).
4	Modules should usually be at level 7 (M).

Y Proposals to include a module(s) that is not at the 'usual' level for the stage will only be permitted when the following conditions apply: the level of the module(s) is only one level above or below the norm for the stage; the requirements for particular awards can still be met; the programme allows for appropriate student progression and development; there are good pedagogic arguments in favour of the variation or exception. Specific consideration has been given to the impact on combined degree programmes. Exceptions must be approved by University Teaching Committee and will be recorded by the University and departments.

³ Foundation Years only

13. Credit levels do not prevent student cohorts at different stages of the programme being taught together, even if they are studying at different levels, providing that the learning outcomes and assessment tasks are differentiated appropriately (in such cases, there will need to be two modules ascribed to different levels). It must also be possible for the specified stage and award requirements to be met (see above).

14. See the University guidance on [credit level descriptors](#).

Assessment periods

15. The University has adopted the following principal model for assessment periods. The large majority of departments are expected to adopt this model. Departments wishing to be exempt must apply to University Teaching Committee to be an exceptional case. All departments wishing to offer combined programmes and/or inter/multi-disciplinary programmes **must** adopt this model for all stages of the programme.⁴

- (a) An extended assessment period for each stage occurs between weeks 5-7 of the Summer term. Assessments may also be scheduled in weeks 8 and 9, provided the department is able to meet the timetable for marking and confirmation of marks to be completed by the end of week 10.
- (b) In addition, week 1 of the Spring term is designated as an assessment period. No scheduled teaching activities may take place in this week even if it is not being used for the completion of assessment tasks.
- (c) Other assessment tasks may be scheduled throughout the academic year but should not disrupt the teaching and learning timetable.
- (d) In the Summer term, structured teaching and/or supported learning should only take place in weeks 1-4. In stage 3 of programmes, it is permissible for these weeks to be focussed on revision and independent study towards the assessment task(s).
- (e) No teaching should take place in week 1 of the Autumn term, to allow students to participate in and support induction and freshers' week activities.

16. Activities during each term using the principal model are represented in diagram 1 below. It is essential that all departments (including any approved as exceptional cases - see **Appendix V**) are able to make progression and assessment decisions to a common timetable before the end of the stage. Common principles underpinning a University timetable for assessment (including reassessments), marking and progression are set out in **Appendix VI**.

⁴ *Foundation years (stage 0)*

Foundation years that are delivered solely by the University are expected to comply with the common assessment periods. If a foundation year is delivered in partnership with a Further Education College (FEC) a case may be made to UTC for the year/stage to be an exception to the common assessment periods in order to fit with existing provision at the FEC at this level. Marks will need to be ready to go to an exam board in Summer term week 10, however.

Foundation degrees









It is appreciated that due to work based learning requirements it may be necessary to apply to UTC for a foundation degree to be an exception to the common assessment periods.

Diagram 1: Week-by-week 'activity map' for use of each term, to enable progression decisions to be made by the end of each stage. Only the principal model is illustrated here.

Weeks

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 and beyond	...17
									end of term			
AUTUMN TERM												
SPRING TERM												
SUMMER TERM												

Key

	teaching and/or supported learning		orientation/induction and supervisory meetings – no formal teaching
	assessment period for students		independent learning
	marking		meetings of Boards of Examiners
	graduation		
	reassessments		

17. Some frequently asked questions relating to common assessment periods and the use of weeks 8 to 10 of the Summer term are provided in **Appendix VII**.

Final stage of integrated masters programmes only

18. In the final stage of integrated masters programmes, week 1 of the Summer term is also designated as an assessment period, to facilitate the sharing of modules with taught postgraduate programmes. No scheduled teaching activities may take place in this week even if it is not being used for the completion of assessment tasks. When designing programmes, departments should give careful consideration to the implications of having two assessment periods during the Summer term.

E. MODULE REQUIREMENTS

Module assessments and marks

19. Every module should be summatively assessed in order to obtain an indication of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme.
20. Each module should carry one numerical mark on the relevant University mark scale, unless the module is designated as pass/fail (see below).
21. Modules may only be marked on a pass/fail basis with the permission of University Teaching Committee. Approval of such modules will only be granted where there is a convincing rationale for this approach (for example, competency based modules in professional/vocational subjects). Such modules will not contribute to the calculation of the final degree classification and cannot be compensated.
22. In exceptional circumstances (e.g., relating to PSRB requirements) a case may be made to University Teaching Committee for modules to be denoted as non-compensatable and/or for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided. The risks related to such modules, and possible alternatives must be fully considered (see **Appendix VIII**).

Permitted module sizes and shapes (The 'Toolkit') ⁵

Table 4

Module size (credits)	Module shape	Guidance on likely use in curriculum design: module size	Stages in which modules of this size and shape may be used	Maximum number of modules of this size and shape distribution per stage ⁶
'LT' modules				
<i>Guidance on use in curriculum design:</i>				
Likely to have one or more of the following characteristics:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate to a discipline or part of a discipline where the body of knowledge is cumulative, with a variety of inter-dependent and inter-related strands that benefit from study over an extended period • Aim to facilitate outcomes, tested through the assessment process, that require considerable reflection over an extended period • Require considerable integration of material, either within the module or across a range of modules, over an extended period, or relate to a method of learning (e.g., problem-based learning) that is designed to facilitate this • Aim to develop capacities, tested through the assessment process, that lead to a substantial piece of independent work (e.g., project or long essay). 				
5	Distributed over the whole stage	Given the relatively small workload (50-150 notional learning hours over the whole stage), likely to focus on skills-based or technical content that nevertheless feeds into or informs subject content-based modules over an extended period of time. Or, alternatively, relate to a mode of learning that draws substantially on content from other modules and provides an opportunity to integrate and reflect on this (e.g., problem-based learning).	1,2,3,4	3
15	Distributed over the whole stage		1,2,3,4	4
10	Distributed over the whole stage		1,2,3,4	2
10	Distributed over the Spring and Summer terms		1,2,3,4	4 But note need to combine with a 30 over two terms if only one used per stage.
20	Distributed over the whole stage		1,2	6
20	Distributed over the whole stage		3,4	4
20	Distributed over the Spring and Summer terms		1,2,3,4	4
30	Distributed over the whole stage		1,2,3,4	4
30	Distributed over the Spring and Summer terms	1,2,3,4	2 But note that would need to be used with a 10 over the two terms.	
40	Distributed over two terms	Suitable for in-depth study of complex subject content, possibly requiring considerable assimilation/synthesis	3,4	2

⁵ Foundation years that are delivered solely by the University are expected to comply with the toolkit. If a foundation year is delivered in partnership with a Further Education College (FEC) a case may be made to UTC for the programme to be an exception to the toolkit in order to fit with existing provision at the FEC at this level.

⁶ The maximum number of modules of this size permitted within a stage has been set based on (i) the overall maxima and minima per stage; (ii) the maximum number of modules permitted to be studied at any one time (as detailed in paragraph 23).

40	Distributed over the whole stage	and use an assessment method that leads to a substantial piece of independent work (e.g., project or long essay).	3,4	3
Max 80 [Note that this is only permitted for independent study in integrated masters programmes]	Distributed over two or three terms		4	1

'SF' modules

Guidance on use in curriculum design:

Likely to have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Focus on knowledge-based content which can be assimilated over a shorter or more intense time period
- Focus on knowledge-based content that is purposefully and essentially sequential – i.e., it is useful for students to learn and be assessed in the body of knowledge before proceeding to the next module
- Form part of a programme where students work towards the overall outcomes through an iterative process and practice of skills, but which are achieved through engagement with discrete bodies of knowledge that are largely self-contained
- Relate to a discipline where the body of knowledge allows greater flexibility in how programme outcomes are achieved, possibly through a wider range of optional modules during each stage.

Note: If you are exploring the use of SF modules in the Spring term, the assessment must not disrupt the teaching and learning timetable, and consideration must be given to the impact on the Summer term (see Additional note 2 below).

5	Contained within a term	Given the small workload (50 notional learning hours), likely to focus on skills-based or technical content.	1,2,3,4	4
10	Contained within a term	Both likely to be suitable for a wide range of subject content, depending on the depth of study or breadth of material to be covered.	1,2,3,4	4
20	Contained within a term		1,2,3,4	6 ⁷
40	Contained within a term	Suitable for in-depth, intensive study of subject content, but with careful consideration of assessment modes, given the short overall learning period.	3,4	3

Additional notes:

1. All modules should, where appropriate, make use of diagnostic and formative assessment, 'in-programme' assessment (e.g., class tests, problem sheets, short essays or reports) and feedback to facilitate students' learning and improve their performance.

2. Whilst not ruling out the possibility of commencing new modules in the Summer term, this is only likely to be appropriate in the principal model for highly specific, intensively taught modules which either consolidate material taught earlier in the stage or address a small and highly specific body of new material, given the relatively short period available for teaching/supported learning in the Summer term (i.e., weeks 1-4). See also **Appendix IX**.

3. In all cases, the assessment of modules for which teaching has been completed should take place during the next available assessment period, taking into consideration the need to provide clear information to students about support available to them in advance of the assessment.

4. Departments should be explicit about the distribution of expected student workload, including vacation and assessment periods. See also **Appendix IX**.

5. To ensure that **combined degrees** can be constructed from the single subject programme, module selections must allow for two separate 60 credit 'blocks' to be populated independently.

6. There is no separate design template for **main/subsidiary combined** degrees. See **Appendix II**.

⁷ But note that a distribution of 40 credits-worth per term, with 40 credits of new modules in the Summer term, would only be permitted where the assessment relating to the Spring term module(s) has been completed prior to the start of the Summer term. This is only possible where the assessment for the Spring term module(s) does not interrupt the teaching and learning timetable.

23. In addition, minima and maxima apply to the number of modules that may be studied in any stage of a programme. These need to be borne in mind in designing combined degrees.

Stages 1 and 2:

- Minimum number of modules that may be studied simultaneously: 2
- Maximum number of modules that may be studied simultaneously: 6
- Minimum number of modules from which a stage of a programme may be constructed: 4
- Maximum number of modules from which a single stage of a programme may be constructed: 9

Stages 3 and 4:

- Minimum number of modules that may be studied simultaneously: 1
- Maximum number of modules that may be studied simultaneously: 5
- Minimum number of modules from which a stage of a programme may be constructed: 3
- Maximum number of modules from which a single stage of a programme may be constructed: 9

24. Further guidance on programme design, including student workload and illustrative templates is provided in **Appendix IX**.

Electives

25. All modules are potentially open to be taken as electives,⁸ subject to availability, capacity, pre-requisites and timetabling constraints. Some modules may not be available due to professional or regulatory requirements or the nature of the module (e.g., very specialist laboratory-based modules).⁹ Elective module choices cannot be guaranteed.
26. Where a programme permits students to undertake modules as electives, the Board of Studies must also ensure that optional modules are available. As the availability of modules as electives is subject to a range of criteria (see above and below), it cannot be guaranteed that a student will be able to undertake a suitable elective module. Therefore it is important that an alternative optional module(s) is available to these students (and is timetabled appropriately).
27. A student's elective choice(s) (where available) must be approved by their home Board of Studies and by the Board of Studies that is responsible for the module that they wish to take as an elective. Boards may approve elective choices, provided that:
- a) the module is of an appropriate credit volume, shape and level;¹⁰
 - b) the timetable can accommodate the module with no clashes;¹¹
 - c) the student has appropriate pre-requisites (if required);
 - d) the module does not inappropriately replicate content/assessment from other modules that the student has undertaken/will undertake. This is particularly important if a student wishes to take as an elective a module that is delivered by their home department;
 - e) the receiving department is willing and able to accept the student onto the module.
28. Additional optional credit may be studied in order to meet later elective pre-requisite requirements. The overall limit for additional optional credit (for the whole programme) is 20 credits. These extra credits will be regarded as additional to the programme requirements and the module results will not contribute to progression or classification requirements.

⁸ Note that not all programmes permit the undertaking of electives (see Sections C and D above regarding the maximum elective credit permitted. There is no minimum requirement).

⁹ Any pre-requisites or other requirements for modules should be clearly stated.

¹⁰ Modules taken as electives must 'fit' in the student's programme structure (i.e., a 30 credit 'long thin' gap where a student can choose an optional module or an elective should not be filled with a 10 credit 'short fat' elective) and should ensure that they can meet the award requirements. See Table 1.

¹¹ The timetable will not be changed to accommodate elective students.

Glossary

Term	Definition
Assessment	<p>Formative assessment has a developmental purpose and is designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and/or maintained. Reflective practice by students sometimes contributes to formative assessment.</p> <p>Summative assessment is used to indicate the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme. <i>Definitions taken from the QAA CoP on the Assessment of Students, 2006</i></p> <p>An assessment process can, and often does, involve more than one of these assessment purposes. For example, an assessment component submitted during a module may provide formative feedback designed to help students improve their performance in subsequent assessments. An end-of-module or end-of-programme examination or other assessment normally results in a summative judgement being made about the level the student has attained, but any feedback on it may also have an intended formative purpose that can help students in assessment later in their programme, or on another programme. <i>Text taken from the QAA CoP on the Assessment of Students, 2006</i></p> <p>A clear timetable for providing students with feedback should be available, students should receive feedback within six weeks of the submission of the assessment. This timetable should enable students to reflect and potentially improve on their performance.</p>
Assessment period(s)	Designated period(s) within a programme of study with no timetabled teaching or supported learning, to enable students to prepare for and complete significant assessment tasks.
Assessment tasks	<p>Any assessment component that allows students the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of declared outcomes. Assessment tasks can take a variety of forms, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio-based assessment • Reflective learning log • Closed examination • Extended essay • Short essay • Oral presentation • Other performance • Laboratory notebooks • Project work • Experimental reports <p>Assessment tasks are an important part of the learning process. Assessment tasks allow students the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the declared learning outcomes of the module or programme. Assessment tasks also allow students the opportunity to gain feedback on their progress and may enable them to improve their understanding of the discipline and future achievement. <i>Adapted from paragraph 1.3 of the University's Guide to Assessment, 2007</i></p> <p>Often there needs to be time between teaching and assessment to permit more reflection upon learning. But in all cases, the timing and distribution of assessment tasks should reflect departmental intentions and expectations in terms of student learning.</p> <p>There should be a variety of assessment types, appropriate to what</p>

	<p>departments want students to learn and achieve, and to enable students to demonstrate achievement.</p> <p>The student workload associated with preparing for and carrying out an assessment should be included in the estimation of the overall workload associated with a module.</p>
Assessment that 'does not disrupt the teaching and learning timetable'	<p>There is not a definitive list of assessment that 'does not disrupt the teaching and learning timetable'.</p> <p>An assessment which disrupts the teaching and learning timetable is one which if scheduled during term time would have a high probability of interfering with students' engagement with the teaching and learning activities of other modules. This might, for example, mean that students are less likely to attend classes or do the required reading because of the volume of work associated with the assessment and/or its importance in contributing to marks towards the final degree classification.</p> <p>When considering if an assessment will disrupt the teaching and learning timetable thought must be given to the likely student workload associated with preparing for and carrying out the assessment, when the assessment, and preparation, will take place, and the likely impact on other modules.</p> <p>Departments should monitor modules that have assessments outside of the common assessment periods (e.g. through student evaluations) and revisit the timing if it is causing disruption.</p>
Award Regulations	<p>The broad set of University-wide regulations that govern all programmes leading to the same award (for example, BA Hons, MA), which deal with issues such as, progression requirements, compensation, reassessment and degree classification. See the Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback</p>
Compensation	<p>Is the process by which an assessment board, in consideration of a student's overall performance, recommends that credit be awarded for part of a programme in which a student has failed to satisfy the assessment criteria, on the grounds that positive aspects of the overall performance outweigh the area of failure.</p> <p>Definition taken from (or modified from) <i>Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (November 2001)</i></p>
Credit	<p>A quantified means of expressing equivalence of learning. Credit is awarded to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level. One credit corresponds to a notional workload of 10 hours (including all classes, private study and assessment).</p> <p>Definition taken (or modified) from <i>Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (November 2001)</i></p>
Credit Level (for modules)	<p>Indicates the module's relative intellectual demand, complexity and depth of learning and of learner autonomy.</p> <p>Definition taken (or modified) from <i>Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (November 2001)</i></p> <p>See the University guidance on credit level descriptors</p>
Diagnostic assessment	<p>Diagnostic assessment is used to show a learner's preparedness for a module or programme and identifies, for the learner and the teacher, any strengths and potential gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills expected at the start of the programme, or other possible problems.</p> <p><i>Definition taken from the QAA CoP on the Assessment of Students, 2006</i></p>

Evenly distributed	<p>This refers to the even distribution of workload for students relating to their learning and NOT to the distribution of teaching activities. Credit indicates notional student workload in terms of <i>learning hours</i> with one credit being the equivalent of 10 notional learning hours. Credit (and consequently student workload) includes teaching time, directed learning, independent study, reading, revision and time spent completing assessment tasks.</p> <p>Overall, full-time student workload for a stage should equate to 1200 hrs (i.e., 120 credits), distributed evenly across the three terms. This equates roughly to a 40-hour week across 30 weeks of the year. It should be noted that an even distribution of workload does not necessarily entail an even distribution of, for example, teaching throughout the duration of a module. Further guidance on workload distribution is provided in Appendix IX.</p>
Extended assessment period	<p>The large majority of assessment tasks are focussed in weeks 5-7 of the Summer term, with other assessment tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either being completed during the assessment period in week one of the Spring term <i>or</i> • falling into the category of assessments that do not disrupt the teaching and learning timetable or in-programme assessment.
In-programme assessment	<p>The assessment of students on the basis of tasks undertaken whilst a module is in progress. Examples of in-programme assessments might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly problem sheets • Class tests • Seminar performance <p>Also sometimes called ‘continuous assessment’.</p> <p>In-programme assessment has a strong formative element, but may also contribute to a summative judgement. These are forms of assessment that are unlikely to disrupt the teaching and learning timetable (see above). Current relevant restrictions in the <i>Guide to Assessment</i> are set out relating to non-written or non-recorded work (section 2.1).</p>
Learning Outcomes	<p>Statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate (these can be at lecture (etc), module or programme level).</p> <p>Definition taken (or modified) from <i>Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (November 2001)</i></p>
Module	<p>A self-contained, formally structured, learning opportunity with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. A module may comprise elements taught by different departments and its function may vary from one programme to another.</p> <p>Core module : a module required for a programme.</p> <p>Optional module : a module chosen from a prescribed list of modules within the approved programme.</p> <p>Elective module : a free-choice module chosen by a student from across the University and from outside their prescribed programme of study (pre-requisites and timetabling permitting). The primary aim of electives is to enable students to develop skills and knowledge outside their main area(s) of study.</p> <p>Pre-requisite module : a module which must be satisfactorily completed prior to embarking on another defined module.</p> <p>Co-requisite modules: module(s) which are mutually dependent. Both/all of which must be studied within a particular programme.</p> <p>Mutually exclusive modules: modules both/all of which cannot be studied within the same programme.</p> <p>Definitions taken (or modified) from <i>Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit guidelines for HE qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (November 2001)</i></p>

Programme	The set of modules studied for a named award (this may include modules (core or optional) from outside the main department). These are set out in the Programme Specifications and approved by University Teaching Committee.
Programme Specifications	Govern a programme of study as an approved pathway leading to a particular named award of the University (for example, BA in Archaeology, BSc in Biology, BA in English and Philosophy). They consist of a defined combination of modules, at an appropriate level, and set out the learning outcomes. These specifications are developed and maintained by Boards of Studies/Combined Boards of Studies/Graduate School Boards and approved by University Teaching Committee.
Qualifications descriptors	The qualifications descriptors that should be referred to when developing programmes are the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the <i>Dublin descriptors</i> of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/QF-EHEA-May2005.pdf) . See also the University guidance on credit level descriptors
Stage	A 'stage' is equivalent to a year's full-time undergraduate study and usually comprises 120 credits.

Some possible approaches to consider when reviewing and developing main/subsidiary combined degrees

1. The modular scheme does not include a template for main/subsidiary combined degrees. This is not to say that main/subsidiary degrees should no longer be offered, however. When reviewing main/subsidiary degrees, departments should consider the intended aims and outcomes of the programme, the student intake and demand, and the implications for the department's teaching provision..
2. The following are some possible approaches that departments might wish to consider when reviewing and developing main/subsidiary programmes:
 - (i) **Would an EQ combined degree be more appropriate?** If there is a strong intellectual link between the two subjects then studying both in equal combination is the ideal.
 - (ii) **Are there other ways in which interdisciplinarity might be introduced?** For example, departments are encouraged to consider if it is possible, and appropriate, to incorporate modules from other departments as options in single subject programmes. Departments will need to have compatible module shapes and sizes, and to think carefully about any pre-requisites. Students would leave with a single subject award but would have had an opportunity to take related modules in another subject/department as part of their degree, which would appear on the academic transcript.
 - (iii) **Could students study in EQ combination in stage 1 and Main/Subsidiary in later stages?** Students would study both subjects in equal combination during the first stage but could then elect to transfer to a Main/Subsidiary combination (or to continue on the EQ combination). Departments might consider this where they think students will want to vary the balance of the two subjects. Programme specifications will need to be clear about the transfers that are possible at the end of stage 1.
 - (iv) **Is a Main/Subsidiary combination throughout the programme the most appropriate for the learning outcomes and aims?** If departments feel this is the most appropriate programme structure this will require communication and negotiation between departments and will depend on them having compatible module sizes and shapes.
3. It is important to note that programme design must ensure that students comply with the credit distribution requirements for their intended award (see Tables 1 and 2).

Study abroad and work placements

1. When designing programmes which include opportunities for students to study abroad and/or undertake work placements, the following should be kept in mind:
 - (a) For the purposes of establishing the weighting in the degree classification only, study abroad and work placements should be designated as part of a stage within a programme. The study abroad or work placement should contribute to the degree classification in accordance with the formula specified for that stage, based on a credit-weighted mean. See illustrations below.
 - (b) Study abroad and work placements should be incorporated into programmes as either 'replacement' or 'additional' credit. Where it is 'additional', this will lengthen the normal period of study required for an award.
 - (c) Where study abroad or work placements are taken as 'replacement' credit, these should usually be given marks on the University mark scale.
 - (d) Where study abroad or work placements are taken as 'additional' credit, Boards of Studies should give consideration to whether, or what proportion of, the credit should be designated as pass/fail or given a mark on the University mark scale. In considering whether particular elements should be designated as pass/fail or carry specific marks, Boards of Studies should have regard to the following:
 - the nature of the anticipated outcomes of the study abroad or work placement and how these contribute to the overall programme learning outcomes
 - the nature of the assessment associated with the study abroad or work placement and the extent to which this lends itself to a threshold (pass/fail) or graded judgement
 - the current position of the UK Socrates-Erasmus Council that 'Full recognition must be given by the home institution for the period spent abroad. For periods of study and placements which are part of the students' curriculum, the sending institutions will award full recognition preferably by using ECTS credits. In the particular case of a period of placement which is not part of the normal curriculum of the student, the sending institution should provide recognition at least by recording this period in the Diploma Supplement.'
 - (e) Students should be made aware that reassessment opportunities cannot be guaranteed in relation to study abroad or work placements. Where appropriate and feasible, Boards of Examiners may offer a reassessment opportunity back in York.
 - (f) Progression decisions should take place *prior* to a student embarking on any period of study abroad or work placement. Students who fail the preceding or 'normal' credit-load stage (taking into account the outcome of any reassessment) will not be allowed to embark on study abroad or work placement. This should be reflected in student work placement contracts.
 - (g) Where a student receives an overall failing mark for a period of study abroad or work placement taken as 'additional' credit, they should be permitted to progress on the normal bachelors programme. Marks for the failed credit will appear on the student's transcript but will not contribute to the calculation of the final award.

2. Two illustrations:

Example 1: a student takes a year in Europe as 120 additional credits (lengthening a full-time bachelors degree to four years), designated as part of stage 2. The mark derived for stage 2 would be the credit-weighted mean across 240 credits, giving the year away a value of 20% in the overall degree classification (based on the 2:3 weighting for marks from stages 2 and 3; note that this gives equal weighting to the additional credit in relation to the 'normal' stage 2 for the bachelors programme).

Example 2: a student takes a year in industry as 120 additional credits (again lengthening a full-time bachelors degree to four years), designated as part of stage 2. The industrial placement is marked on a pass/fail basis. The mark derived for stage 2 would still be based on the credit-weighted mean across 240 credits, but would of necessity exclude the pass/fail element, giving the year in industry a zero weighting in the overall degree classification (although whether it is passed or failed would be reflected in the final programme title awarded).

3. See also University Teaching Committee's [Policy Statement on Placement Learning and Study Abroad](#) and the QAA's section of the [Code of Practice on work-based and placement learning](#)

Programme titles

1. Programme titles associated with awards should reflect the programme content and final achievements of students.
 - (a) In the case of integrated masters degrees, students who fail to meet the progression requirements for entry to stage 4, or whose performance in stage 4 does not reach the standard required, should be eligible for the award of a bachelors degree. Where the programme structure and/or accreditation requirements mean that a student cannot meet the outcomes for the standard named bachelors degree, a programme title that differentiates the different routes should be used. Where the programme outcomes and/or accreditation requirements can be met, the standard bachelors degree title should be used;
 - (b) Any additional requirements for particular programme titles (for example, for accredited programmes) must be specified in the programme specification and also the Award Regulations;

Additionally the following principles should be observed:

- (c) University documentation should refer consistently to 'combined programmes' with main, subsidiary and equal components;
- (d) such programmes should be designated as 'A *with* B' (for main/subsidiary combinations) and 'A *and* B' (for equal combinations);
- (e) equal combination programmes should, so far as possible, be ordered alphabetically. It is acknowledged, however, that there might need to be some exceptions to this rule;
- (f) programmes managed by a single Board of Studies should not be referred to as combined programmes. Programmes *within* a department with two named subjects ('A and B' or 'A with B') should still meet the relevant Award-level credit distributions, however (as set out in Table 1 above);
- (g) Biochemistry and PPE should be regarded as integrated programmes in their own right and not as combined programmes;
- (h) if a programme managed by a single Board of Studies has named 'pathways' the relevant Award-level credit distributions apply for 'A with B' and 'A and B' programme titles;
- (i) an additional year spent in Europe or on an industrial or research placement should be indicated in the programme name and on the degree certificate;
- (j) the term 'sandwich year' should not be used and should be replaced by reference to, for example, 'a year in industry';
- (k) the length of a programme should always (and only) be indicated if there is a foundation year or year away from York that increases the overall length of the programme in relation to the norms of three years for a BA/BSc or four years for an MMath, MChem etc; for example, 'MEng in Electronic Engineering (5-year with a year in industry)';
- (l) the award title of a Foundation Degree at the University of York should be as follows: Foundation Degree in Science *or* Arts *or* Engineering in X (subject area), to be abbreviated as FdSc/FdA/FdEng in X;
- (m) the mode of study (e.g. distance learning) should not be included in the programme title (and therefore will not appear on the degree certificate). However, the mode of study will be indicated on the academic transcript.

Assessment periods: exceptional cases

1. Departments are discouraged from seeking to be exempt from the requirements of the principal model for assessment periods (see above, Section D). However, where a department has exhausted the possibilities of programme design within the principal model, it may seek approval to be considered as an exceptional case, but should note that it excludes them from offering combined or inter/multi – disciplinary programmes involving modules from other departments now or in the future. Receiving approval as an exceptional case still requires departments to complete the assessment process, including marking and decisions regarding progression and classification, to the common timetable set out in **Appendix VI** and meet the expectations of the rest of the modular scheme.
2. If approved as an exceptional case:
 - teaching/supported learning may continue beyond week 4 of the Summer term. Assessment tasks must nevertheless be completed, marked and marks confirmed at a meeting of the Board of Examiners according to the common timetable.
 - use may be made of assessment periods in the Autumn and Spring terms and the beginning of the Summer term. Where used, these should occur in either week 10 of each term or week 1 of the Spring and Summer terms. Other assessment tasks may be scheduled throughout the academic year but should not disrupt the teaching and learning timetable. Assessments must be scheduled to enable progression decisions to be completed at the end of a stage.
3. The following are likely conditions for consideration as an exceptional case:
 - there is a sound pedagogic rationale for structuring the programme(s) according to an exceptional assessment model and this also fits with the recruitment pattern(s) of the department concerned AND
 - the department is not involved in any combined degrees or inter/multi –disciplinary degrees with other departments OR
 - any modules delivered as part of combined degrees or inter/multi –disciplinary degrees are delivered according to the principal model for assessment periods and are only made available to students taking programmes in the ‘exceptional case’ department where this can be done without creating any clashes for students between timetabled teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks AND
 - the department does not anticipate the development of combined degrees or inter/multi –disciplinary degrees with other departments in the foreseeable future and accepts that, should they wish to develop such programmes, they would need to review their curriculum to fit with the principal model for assessment periods AND
 - discussions with other departments regarding the likely impact of the approval have taken place and other options fully explored.

Common principles to enable progression decisions to be made by the end of each stage

- (a) There should be no teaching in weeks 8-10 of the Summer term: these weeks should be reserved primarily for marking and meetings of Boards of Examiners. Exceptionally, assessments may be held in weeks 8 and 9, provided departments are still able to meet the timetable for marking and assessment decisions.
- (b) All assessments, marking and progression and classification decisions should be completed by the end of week 10 of the Summer term.
- (c) Where possible there should be just one meeting of the Board of Examiners that deals with all students in all stages of the programme.
- (d) Reassessments should be held in the third week of August. Whilst they need to be appropriate to measure the learning outcomes, they need not be onerous and do not necessarily have to follow the same format as the first assessment. No assessment instruments with which students are unfamiliar should be introduced at the reassessment stage, however.
- (e) The University has a principal model for assessment periods covering all stages of programmes, which the large majority of departments are expected to adopt, to facilitate compatibility between programmes.

Common Assessment Periods: FAQs

Q1 Can the extended assessment period be used for supervision of assessed work?

A: The extended assessment period may be used for tasks that support the assessment process, so supervision sessions relating to the assessed work, for example providing feedback on drafts, revision classes and preparation for performances are all permitted.

Q2 In the final stage, could the first 4 weeks of the Summer term be used for teaching if the timetable for completing assessments could still be adhered to?

A: Yes. However, it is acknowledged that, because of the high level of independence required of students at this stage, for many modules this will be a period of mainly independent study for students working on dissertations and projects.

Q3 Is it possible to use the Summer term to commence a new module?

A: Yes. However, this is only likely to be appropriate for highly specific, intensively taught modules which either consolidate material taught earlier in the stage or address a small and highly specific body of new material, given the short period available for teaching/supported learning in the Summer term (i.e., weeks 1-4).

Q4 What activities are permitted in week 1 of the Autumn term? Why has UTC decided that no formal teaching should take place?

A: Week 1 of the Autumn term has been designated a 'no teaching' week for all students. However, induction and orientation, supervision and feedback on assessment may take place during this period. UTC decided that, given the considerable number of students involved in providing induction and orientation events for new students, it would be better to designate this as a 'no teaching' week.

Q5 Can assessments take place later than week 7 in the Summer term, if the department can still meet the University timetable for assessment decisions?

*A: Yes. The extended assessment period is now shown extending into weeks 8 and 9. Whilst we expect that in most cases, departments will not want to set assessment deadlines or schedule examinations this late in the term, departments may do so provided they are still able to complete marking and confirm assessment decisions according to the timetable set out in **Appendix VI**.*

Q6 We currently share some level 7 (M) modules between the final year of our IM undergraduate programme and our taught masters. How will this work under the new scheme?

A: To facilitate the sharing of modules between stages 4 and 5 of IM programmes and taught postgraduate programmes, it has been agreed that week 1 of the Summer term will be designated as an additional assessment period in the final stage of integrated masters programmes only.

Q7 What should students do in weeks 8-10 of the Summer term?

A: Departments need to consider how they will use weeks 8-10 of the Summer Term in Stages 1 and 2 (and 3 in the case of integrated masters programmes). Options include:

- *Assessment with a quick turn-around e.g. presentations, assessed lectures or poster sessions*
- *Feedback to students*
- *Initial preparation for work in the following Stage (e.g. self-study VLE materials, dissertation preparation, 'tasters' of next year's modules)*
- *Opportunities for skills development (e.g. self-study VLE materials)*
- *Personal employability planning (PEP) and careers events*
- *Enterprise training (contact the CETLE)*
- *Student-led conference*
- *Activities which involve students from a higher stage providing orientation for students in a lower stage, e.g. project presentations by final-year students, attended by students in earlier years*
- *Social events*
- *Field-trips*
- *Open days, with current students talking to A level students*
- *Getting students to help develop materials for widening participation, transition, etc.*
- *Live/recorded performances accompanied by discussions, e.g. musical performances, philosophical/political films, etc.*

Modules designated as non-compensatable and/or for which reassessment opportunities cannot be provided

If programme designers wish to designate particular modules as non-compensatable and/or as having no reassessment opportunity available, it will require specific approval from University Teaching Committee, based on strong arguments relating to, for example, the overall appropriateness of the standard required or PSRB accreditation requirements.

Both designations (and in particular when used together) carry risks. For example, they reduce the opportunities for students to redeem marginal (30-39) and outright (below 30) failure.

MODULE	Compensatable	Non-compensatable (pass/fail modules are non-compensatable, by definition)
Reassessment Available	Most modules will be compensatable and have reassessment opportunities.	<p>If a module is denoted as non-compensatable it means that achievement of that module's learning outcomes is essential for students to be able to continue the programme, and meet the programme's learning outcomes, and that a compensatable mark (30-39) is not acceptable.</p> <p>Examples of the types of modules this might (but does not necessarily) include are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency based modules in professional/vocational programmes • Skills modules • Core modules deemed non-compensatable by professional bodies. <p><i>Alternative approaches/issues to consider</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The programme design makes it possible to demonstrate the achievement of a programme's learning outcomes across a range of modules. • Ensure assessment tasks are designed to provide opportunities to demonstrate achievement at the passing threshold.
No Reassessment Available	<p>If a module is denoted as having no reassessment available it is being indicated that the nature of the module means the assessment cannot be repeated.</p> <p>Examples of the types of modules this might (but does not necessarily) include are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fieldwork • Group projects • Study abroad <p><i>Alternative approaches/issues to consider</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A different format of assessment is used at reassessment. Whilst it needs to be appropriate to measure the achievement of learning outcomes, it need not be onerous and does not necessarily have to follow the same format as the first assessment (For example, assessing a review of practical techniques rather than a lab notebook). No assessment instruments with which students are unfamiliar should be introduced at the reassessment stage, however. The format of the reassessment must be stated in the module description. • For study abroad, can appropriate reassessment opportunities be offered in York? 	Modules may only be non-compensatable with no reassessment opportunities in very exceptional cases. Failure of such a module at the first attempt would result in a student being discontinued.

Some notes on student workload, and illustrative templates for programme design

- 1 In addition to developing programme structures within the framework described above, departments need to reflect on their overall programme philosophy and aims, and the implications of this for curriculum design. This in turn will influence the choice of module sizes and distribution for each stage. The division of the academic year into two uneven teaching, learning and assessment 'blocks' is an important concept in thinking about programmes and is reflected in the illustrative templates provided below. Whilst this structure works well with year-long modules and can work well with a mixture of one and two –term modules, it requires some careful consideration if a department's preference is to make substantive use of modules contained within a single term.

Student workload

- 2 Overall, full-time student workload for a stage should equate to a notional 1200 hours (i.e., 120 credits) of learning, distributed roughly evenly throughout the academic year. In addition to teaching and other contact time, this workload includes independent study, revision and time spent on assessment. It is important to remember that credit is based on *notional* workload, but also that clear information needs to be provided to students about when and roughly how much time they should be spending on their studies and how this is divided between various activities. There has been much discussion regarding what constitutes an even workload, given the 'unequal blocks' created by the two assessment periods. The illustrative templates provided below show the distribution of credit based on simple structures.

Illustrative templates

3. Programme structures should be as simple as possible – for the sake of clarity for students, ease of management by departments and enabling compatibility for the delivery of combined degrees and development of interdisciplinary programmes. Some simple structures that are likely to work well under the new scheme are illustrated below. It should be noted that these have been constructed largely with stages 1 and 2 in mind. However, the larger module sizes permitted in stages 3 and 4 could easily be incorporated as variations within the different templates.

Template 1: based on 20-credit one term and two-term modules

Autumn period	Spring/Summer period
20-credit module	20-credit module
	20-credit module
20-credit module	20-credit module
	20-credit module

Template 2: based on year long 20-credit modules

20-credit year-long module
20-credit year-long module
20-credit year-long module
20-credit year-long module
20-credit year-long module
20-credit year-long module

Template 3: based on year long 30-credit modules

30-credit year-long module
30-credit year-long module
30-credit year-long module
30-credit year-long module

Hybrid templates provide additional possibilities for single subject programmes, but also illustrate how some combined degrees might look if constructed from single subject programmes using different templates.

Template 4: hybrid of 1 and 2

Autumn period	Spring/Summer period
20-credit module	20-credit module
	20-credit module
20-credit year-long module	
20-credit year-long module	
20-credit year-long module	

Template 5: hybrid of 1 and 3

Autumn period	Spring/Summer period
20-credit module	20-credit module
	20-credit module
30-credit year-long module	
30-credit year-long module	

Template 6: hybrid of 2 and 3

20-credit year-long module
20-credit year-long module
20-credit year-long module
30-credit year-long module
30-credit year-long module

- 5 Whilst simplicity in programme structures is desirable, we realise that some departments will need to use a wider range of module shapes and sizes for a variety of reasons (for example, to suit particular approaches to learning or for delivery of skills modules). Nevertheless, it could be useful to start from one of the suggested templates and modify this to produce variations within the structure. The possibilities for variations in each case will be determined by the overall parameters set out in the main document.

Foundation Degrees

The award title of a Foundation Degree at the University of York should be as follows: Foundation Degree in Science *or* Arts *or* Engineering in X (subject area), to be abbreviated as FdSc/FdA/FdEng in X.

Some Fundamental Principles for the Design of Foundation Degrees

1. A Foundation Degree programme shall be of two academic years in duration full-time, or equivalent part-time.
2. A Foundation Degree programme shall comprise modules with a total value of 240 credits, of which at least 90 credits shall be at level 5 (I) on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).
3. A Foundation Degree programme shall meet the defining characteristics of Foundation Degrees (namely employer involvement, accessibility, articulation and progression, flexibility and partnership) as set out in the [QAA Foundation Degree qualification benchmark](#)
4. The intended learning outcomes of a Foundation Degree should be appropriate for a qualification at Level 5 (I) on the FHEQ. The intended learning outcomes, curriculum and assessment of a Foundation Degree shall be informed by the Foundation Degree qualification benchmark.
5. A Foundation Degree programme shall incorporate work-based-learning as an integral part of its design. There shall be at least 20 credits of work-based-learning per level of study.
6. A Foundation Degree programme shall be awarded on a Pass or Fail basis, and the final result shall be calculated on marks from stage 2 modules only. Students who successfully complete stage 1 of a Foundation Degree shall be eligible for a Certificate of Higher Education.
7. A Foundation Degree shall articulate to at least one Bachelors with Honours programme offered by the University of York or other UK HEI. Graduates of a Foundation Degree shall be able to complete the articulated programme in no more than 1.3 academic years of full-time study, or part-time equivalent.
8. The final degree classification of a student who has progressed to a University of York Bachelors with Honours programme, from a Foundation Degree programme, shall be based solely on stage 3 modules.