NORWICH UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

Vice-Chancellor: Professor Simon Ofield-Kerr

AWARD AND CREDIT SCHEME

For taught awards up to Level 7* (Masters)

*Office for Students' Sector Recognised Standards Qualification Descriptors

11th Edition June 2024

NB This edition of the Award and Credit Scheme replaces the following: Award and Credit Scheme 10th Edition, September 2023.

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1. THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF THE AWARD AND CREDIT SCHEME

1.1 **The Norwich University Award and Credit Scheme supports a distinctive approach to curriculum and course design which the University has determined are the most appropriate for its students and for the institutional scale and resource strategy. The Scheme provides the framework for curriculum design and the structure of academic awards up to Masters level. As such the Award and Credit Scheme actively supports the Vision of the University:**

> *"Ambitious and committed to the extraordinary creativity of our staff and students, over the next five years Norwich University of the Arts will become the place where the debate about the future of creativity and creative arts education is most passionately engaged."*

1.2 The overall purpose of the Award and Credit Scheme is to facilitate the development and delivery of an excellent student experience which will prepare our students for employment, enterprise and/or further study. In this context, the Scheme is designed to:

   i. Enable flexible course delivery
   ii. Support student engagement, continuation, completion and achievement of their personal aims and aspirations;
   iii. Enhance course, Programme and University planning processes;
   iv. Facilitate the development and validation of new awards and modes of study;
   v. Extend possibilities for collaboration between disciplines, courses and students;
   vi. Enhance graduate employability by enabling students to benefit from live learning opportunities in collaboration with high-quality creative industries;
   vii. Enable greater consistency in the quality of information for students, staff and external audiences.

1.3 Associated with the Award and Credit Scheme are: the *Student Regulations and Procedures*, which include the University's procedures for assessment, internal moderation, external examination, and Assessment and Award Boards; and the *Quality Management and Enhancement (QME) Handbook*, which includes the University's procedures for course development and approval, annual course review and periodic review.

1.4 The *Award and Credit Scheme*, *Student Regulations and Procedures* and *QME Handbook* are each key components of the University's Academic Regulatory Framework for the management and enhancement of academic quality and standards. The Academic Regulatory Framework and its components have been developed with reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. No amendments can be made to the Academic Regulatory Framework and its components without the approval of Academic Board.

   NB. The Award and Credit Scheme does not encompass the University's postgraduate research degree programmes, which are validated by the University of the Arts London. Please refer to the Research Degree Programme Moodle pages on the University intranet.

2.   FUNDAMENTAL FEATURES OF THE AWARD AND CREDIT SCHEME

2.1   The Award and Credit Scheme and the UK Quality Code

2.1.1   The Award and Credit Scheme (or "the Scheme") enables the design and delivery of programmes of study which lead to awards or qualifications as outlined in Section H of the *Student Regulations & Procedures.* The University has taught degree awarding powers. We also offer students the opportunity to study for postgraduate research degrees leading to the awards of Master of Philosophy ("MPhil") or Doctor of Philosophy ("PhD") through its validation partnership with the University of the Arts London.

2.1.2   The University's procedures for the development, approval, monitoring and review of its academic provision take account of the national expectations for HE quality assurance which are set out in the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education.*

2.1.3   In respect of the Award and Credit Scheme**,** the key reference points are the *[OfS Sector Recognised Standards](referred) to herein as the SRS)* and the relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statements as listed below:

Key QAA Subject Benchmark Statements:
[Art and Design Subject Benchmark Statement](#)
[Architecture Subject Benchmark Statement](#)
[Computing Subject Benchmark Statement](#)
[Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies](#)
[Business and Management](#)
[Dance, Drama and Performance](#)

2.2   Study modes, levels, and units of study

2.2.1   The following modes of study are available:
Undergraduate – full-time
Postgraduate – full-time and part-time
Short courses – part-time

2.2.2   Undergraduate courses may include an option to undertake an integrated foundation year or Year 0 which is set above QCG Level 3 and prepares students for entry to undergraduate Level 4.

2.2.3   Undergraduate courses may include an option for students to elect to study a Level 5 Diploma course after completing Level 5 (Year 2) of the course. Level 5 Diploma provision is aligned with Level 5 of the SRS. Level 5 Diploma units will be undertaken as a component of a BA/BSc (Hons) programme and may lead to an award of BA/BSc (Hons) [award title] with Diploma in [title of Diploma]. For PSRB approved courses inclusion of the Level 5 Diploma option will need approval by the relevant body.

2.2.4 The University has agreed and published overall Aims and Outcomes for its integrated foundation year (Year 0), undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. These can be seen in *Annex 1, The Aims and Outcomes of Taught Programmes of Study in the Norwich Award and Credit Scheme*.. They summarise the knowledge, skills and personal qualities which students are expected to be able to demonstrate at the following stages of their studies:

    i.   At the successful conclusion of the integrated foundation year (Year 0)
    ii.   Undergraduate – at the successful conclusion of SRS Qualification Descriptor Level 6
    iii. Postgraduate Taught – at the successful conclusion of SRS Qualification Descriptor Level 7 (Masters).

2.2.5 The key component of the Award and Credit Scheme is the unit of study. All taught courses are made up of units that form blocks of study. Each unit has a defined credit weighting appropriate to the learning and level of study.

2.2.6 Undergraduate course units are offered at SRS Levels 4, 5 and 6 and taught postgraduate units are offered at SRS Levels 6 and 7.

2.2.7 Approved course structures govern the size and shape of the units in a specified course. Each unit within a course structure has a defined credit weighting appropriate to the learning and level of study. These are defined in Annex 2: Approved Course Structures.

2.3 Academic credit

2.3.1 Credit in the Award and Credit Scheme reflects the guidance of the Quality Assurance Agency and Sector Recognised Standards published by the OfS. All awards contain the relevant number of credits defined by the SRS Qualifications Descriptors and are defined in Section H of the *Student Regulations and Procedures*. In terms of study hours, 1 credit represents 10 notional study hours.

2.3.2 With the exception of the integrated foundation year (Year 0), all course units are credit-rated. This fulfils two primary purposes:

    i.   To allow recognition and recording of students' achievements. A student successfully completing any unit is awarded credit. Records of credit are maintained by Registry and each student receives their record in a transcript when they complete their studies.
    ii. To facilitate student transfer to or from another institution.

2.3.3 Relevant prior educational experience and work experience (including relevant volunteering activity) may be credited through Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) procedures for direct entry students or applicants without formal entry qualifications. The APL policy and procedure is published on the university website.

2.3.4 Postgraduate Taught units are generally aligned with Level 7 (Masters level) of the SRS. Courses may include up to 30 credits of Level 6 units and still be eligible for the award of Master of Arts or Master of Science.

2.3.5　　Credit is accumulated as units are completed. Students who withdraw or transfer out before completion of the intended award may be eligible to receive an exit award based on the credit they have accumulated, as outlined in Section H of the *Student Regulations & Procedures.*

3. PRINCIPLES OF THE AWARD AND CREDIT SCHEME

3.1 The Scheme is unit-based and operates according to the principles outlined below. These principles provide the basis for curriculum design and are tested through the University's procedures for course development, approval and review.

3.2 Pedagogical Principles

3.2.1 The University's Creative Learning Strategy outlines the values of the Norwich pedagogy, informed by staff research, scholarship and professional practice.

3.2.2 Project-centred learning provides a teaching strategy that integrates all aspects of the curriculum through open-ended challenges and briefs. This approach underpins our courses providing a method of delivery that integrates contextual knowledge with creative, technical and critical thinking skills and develops independent learners.

3.2.3 Debate, collaboration, and interdisciplinarity are important features of our curriculum. The generic course units in the Scheme enable us to offer informal and formal collaborative and interdisciplinary opportunities to students at all levels of study.

3.2.4 The Scheme is designed to enable an inclusive curriculum that (a) meets the needs of a diverse student population, and (b) ensures that students are appropriately prepared for successive levels of study. This approach promotes progression from Year 0 level entrants to undergraduate and taught postgraduate levels.

3.2.5 Units of study are designed to equip students with appropriate skills for research, practice and reflection along with the knowledge and understanding of global issues, environmental sustainability, and ethics that will equip them with professional and life skills enabling them to graduate with confidence and the ability to create their own opportunities.

3.2.6 The scheme articulates common strands of learning through a set of named Curriculum Areas for each approved course structure. The Curriculum Areas include clusters of topics that identify progressively complex concepts, knowledge and skills throughout the units and levels of the programme of study.

3.2.7 The scheme applies holistic assessment which recognises the interdependence of all elements listed in the assessment requirements of the unit. Work is assessed holistically to seek evidence of meeting each Learning Outcome. Individual components are not given numerical weightings.

3.3 Structural Principles

3.3.1 All courses must follow one of the approved course structures as defined in Annex 2: Approved Course Structures. The relevant course structure will be agreed through the course approval process. The composition and range of course structures may not be varied without the approval of Academic Board.

3.3.2 At Postgraduate Taught level, courses may be designed with core and optional units to provide students with a choice of study options.

3.3.3   Course units are prepared to a standard template; the Unit Outline, which includes credits; study hours; an overview or description; curriculum areas / topics covered; aims; learning outcomes; and assessment requirements. This provides clarity for students and promotes the effective management of student expectations.

3.3.4   A Unit Outline may be generic to a number of courses in all but title. For example, a unit could be titled 'Fundamentals of xxx' where xxx can be one of a number of disciplines.

3.3.5   Course-specific content is usually articulated through the Unit Handbook which includes the Unit Outline. Unit Handbooks follow a standard template and translate the generic information contained in the Unit Outline into discipline-specific requirements. A Unit Handbook is required for each unit of the course.

3.3.6   Unit Handbooks include an overview of what students will be doing in the unit, how the Curriculum Areas and Topics will be addressed and how the unit will be delivered. Unit Handbooks also explain what needs to be submitted for assessment and how the work will be assessed (Assessment Requirements).

3.3.7   Units of study may contain multiple projects. Project Briefs provide specific information about the nature of the project. They are designed by course teams using guidance from the QME handbook and can be adjusted and amended in year with the approval of the appropriate Director of Programme. This gives flexibility for live briefs and collaborative projects as they occur.

3.4   Course content, teaching and assessment

3.4.1   Teams responsible for course development and review are required to take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements in curriculum design.

3.4.2   Teams responsible for course development and review are required to use the Inclusive Curriculum Framework as a reference point for content, assessment and delivery design.

3.4.3   Indicative content for each unit is described through the 'topics covered' section of the Unit Handbook. Topics are clustered into their relevant Curriculum Areas to ensure coverage of all generic and specific content for the unit.

3.4.4   Learning Outcomes for each unit are translated into discipline-specific language within the Unit Handbooks to assist student understanding of the assessment methods and process.

3.4.5   Assessment processes are supported by guidance to course teams and students on the timing of assessment and the assessment requirements required for the successful completion of course units. Summative assessment takes place at the end of each unit of study and is ratified at the end of the academic year by Assessment and Award Boards.

3.4.6   Where appropriate student choice may be exercised through the negotiation of assessment requirements with tutors. This includes the partial or complete fulfilment of approved unit learning outcomes through, for example, work placement, study abroad or volunteering activities. In such instances, Learning Agreements can be used to define the work that students propose to produce for assessment in order to achieve the required unit Learning Outcomes.

3.4.7   Assessment Requirements are usually based on course work and may include the submission of practical work, oral or visual presentations, portfolios, and/or written work.

3.4.8   The mechanism for assuring and verifying that ensuring academic standards are achieved in each discipline are defined in section D of the *Student Regulations and Procedures.*

3.5   Course Delivery

3.5.1   Course units, irrespective of their size, are delivered using the methods which are the most appropriate to the stated learning outcomes.

3.5.2   Information on delivery, teaching, learning and assessment is provided via the relevant course Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), prior to the start of each unit. Other unit information provided on the VLE will include unit timetable; information about resources; and any specific guidance in respect of independent study.

3.5.3   Teaching is identified on course timetables. Timetabled teaching, access to resources, and the academic year planner determine the pattern of study for a unit. Non-taught weeks may be scheduled into units to allow time for independent study, assessment and feedback to students.

3.5.4   The overall study load placed on students should not give rise to unreasonable peaks and troughs in unit delivery times. The pattern of teaching may vary within and between units in order to appropriately support the type and pace of learning associated with the unit.

3.5.5   Timetabled sessions may take place in a physical space or online as befits the nature of teaching and the resources available. Generally, there will be a combination of delivery across the timetable. Some postgraduate taught and short courses maybe delivered entirely online.

3.6   Exceptional Principles

3.6.1   **BA (Hons) Architecture and Master of Architecture (MArch)**

3.6.1.1 The Award and Credit Scheme provides the framework in which the BA (Hons) Architecture and MArch courses meet the requirements of the Architects Registration Board (ARB), the Professional Standards and Regulatory Body (PSRB) for Architects in the UK. Emphasis is placed on the Subject Benchmark Statement for Architecture introduced in 2010 and revised in 2020, which includes the 11 clauses contained in the EU Professional Qualifications Directive 2005 (Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications, Article 46 1a-k). These 11 requirements are referred to as the General Criteria.

3.6.1.2 The BA (Hons) Architecture and MArch units are described in Unit Outlines and are not translated through Unit Handbooks.

3.6.1.3   For BA (Hons) Architecture, the Learning Outcomes for each unit are formed from the General Criteria and in Year 3, the Graduate Attributes. The curriculum has been designed to support students to achieve these criteria and attributes incrementally throughout the course.

3.6.1.4   The BA (Hons) Architecture and MArch Unit Outlines are accompanied by project briefs. Project briefs form the approved documents which detail the specific and distinctive activities within each unit. The project briefs provide information about the work which students will need to submit for assessment; the Learning Outcomes which the project addresses; and information on how students will be assessed.

3.6.1.5   The approved course structures can be found in Annex 2: Approved Course Structures.

3.6.2   Short Courses

3.6.2.1   Short courses are units that may be offered as stand-alone short courses or be combined to count towards an award. Units can be offered at SRS Levels 4 – 7. Short course units follow the same principles outlined above for all courses.

3.6.2.2   Credit accumulated from short courses may be combined to qualify for an award only where there is an approved award validated by the University. Students must have met any specific core unit requirements, and allowable credit combinations, in order to qualify for an award.

3.6.2.3   Students who accumulate credit from one or more short courses that are not part of a validated award may still apply for direct entry onto one of the University's taught courses. Completion of units at Levels 4 and 5 will normally be eligible for progression to one of our undergraduate courses; completion of level 6 or 7 units may be eligible for progression to one of our postgraduate taught courses (with the exception of MArch).

3.7   The academic year for taught programmes

3.7.1   Undergraduate awards

3.7.1.1   The academic year for undergraduate Year 0 and Year 1 (Level 4) students comprises 31 weeks which includes one week for welcome and familiarisation activities. For each of Years 2 and 3 (Levels 5 and 6), the academic year comprises 30 weeks in total.

3.7.1.2   Units are delivered for the requisite number of weeks within the academic year (40 credit units over 10 weeks, 60 credit units over 15 weeks and 80 credit units over 20 weeks).

3.7.2   Short courses are not restricted to the standard undergraduate academic year and may be delivered at times which meet the needs of their market or audience.

3.7.3   Postgraduate Taught awards

3.7.3.1   The academic year for most postgraduate taught students is 45 weeks. Following a welcome week for new students, the year comprises three 15-week teaching and assessment blocks.

3.7.3.2   The academic year for MArch postgraduate students is 30 weeks. Following a welcome week for new students, the year comprises three 10-week teaching and assessment blocks.

3.7.3.3   Short courses are not restricted to the standard postgraduate taught academic year and may be delivered at times which meet the needs of their market or audience.

Annexes

Available as separate PDF documents:

Annex 1   **The Aims and Outcomes of Taught Programmes of Study**

Annex 2   **Approved Course Structures** (Pending approval for 2024-25)

Annex 3   **Unit Outlines**

Annex 4   **Unit Maps** (Pending review and approval for 2024-25)

Annex 5   **Table of Awards and Credits**