Office of Quality, Standards and Partnerships



QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL Foundation Degrees

SECTION 02D

Introduction

Designed in association with industry employers, a Foundation Degree is a Level 5 qualification that combines academic study with workplace learning. Foundation Degrees are qualifications to equip people with the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve academic results as well as improve performance and productivity in the workplace.

Work-based learning can be achieved through many forms, including full-time or part-time work, integrated work placements, and real work environments.

In particular, Foundation Degrees should:

Be vocationally orientated, and responsive to the needs of industry

Contain a mandatory, substantive work-based learning element, with specific content that prepares students for the work-based learning elements and distinct and assessed learning outcomes in relation to work-based learning

Be flexible to the needs of students with regard to admissions, progression, delivery modes and study arrangements

Ensure employers are involved in the design, delivery and regular review of programmes. Employers are also involved, where appropriate and valid, in the assessment of the programme and the monitoring of students, particularly within the workplace

Identify at least one progression route onto a University Honours Degree, along with any required Bridging Programme. Progression to professional and vocational qualifications should also be considered

All Foundation Degrees should take into account the Quality Assurance Agency's CharacteristicStatement on Foundation Degrees, which will be confirmed through programme (re)validation:

https://www.gaa.ac.uk/guality-code/characteristics-statements

Bridging Programmes

A Bridging Programme consists of discrete Level 5 module(s) that address any shortfalls in content and skills that would preclude students progressing to Honours level study. These usually include the research skills required to prepare students for the final level dissertation and any pre-requisite subject content required.

There may be circumstances where the articulation between the Foundation Degree and the identified Honours programme requires a Bridging Programme to ensure students are adequately prepared for the next level of study.

Proposals for Bridging Programmes, including relevant module specifications, must be approved by the panel at (re)validation. Students must pass the full assessment requirements of any required Bridging Programme in order to progress to an identified Honours programme. A Bridging Programme shall not be greater than 30 credits in size. In exceptional circumstances the relevant College Academic Affairs Committee may approve a bridging programme using the procedures set out in Quality Assurance Manual 2A *Approval – Short Courses and Microcredentials*, but will need to satisfy itself that the programme adequately prepares students for progression.

The (re)validation panel shall ensure that all arrangements for progression, including those involving a bridging programme, are appropriate and sufficiently prepare students for the next level of study. The (re)validation panel may require supporting documentation such as a formal curriculum mapping document in order to assure itself of the appropriateness of progression arrangements.