

GLOSSARY

This glossary has been put together to provide definitions of terms that are used within the University but may not be commonly understood outside the institution, or may be understood differently in different contexts. For fuller information on regulations, committees and quality systems, see the Quality A – Z:

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/qm/AZindex.htm>

Academic Link Person is defined as the named contact person at the University, responsible for academic advice and support in relation to collaborative programmes or short programmes leading to an award or the award of credit from the University.

Accreditation of Prior (Experiential or Certificated) Learning (APL/APEL/APCL) – see Recognition of Prior Learning.

Agent is defined as a third party employed by Queen Margaret University to fulfil certain functions in order to facilitate overseas recruitment. An agent is not normally involved with the delivery of the programme.

Annual Programme Monitoring is the process of reviewing the effectiveness of a programme during the previous academic year. In conducting annual monitoring, programme teams are expected to make use of the available evidence including student evaluations, external examiner reports and performance indicators. An annual monitoring report is produced, including an action plan of improvements.

Articulation is defined as a particular form of agreement between Queen Margaret University and another institution, which will involve Queen Margaret University recognising and granting specific credit and advanced standing to applicants from a named programme of study pursued in the other institution. This is not Accreditation of Prior Learning as it does not require individual assessment of an applicant. A signed articulation agreement will be necessary.

Award denotes a degree, diploma, certificate or other similar formal mark of recognition of successful completion of a programme of study.

The standard awards used by QMU for taught programmes and criteria for eligibility are:

- Higher Education Certificate – 120 credits at SCQF 7
- Higher Education Diploma – 240 credits with at least 120 at SCQF 8
- BA / BSc / BBA – 360 credits with at least 120 at SCQF 9
- BA (Hons) / BSc (Hons) – 480 credits with at least 120 at SCQF 10
- Graduate Certificate – 60 credits at SCQF 9 or 10
- Graduate Diploma – 240 credits with at least 120 at SCQF 9 or 10
- PgCert – 60 credits at SCQF 11
- PgDip – 120 credits at SCQF 11
- MA / MBA / MSc /Executive Masters – 180 credits at SCQF 11

Blended Learning refers to a delivery model that combines distance learning with some face-to-face teaching.

Board of Examiners is the committee with formal responsibility for considering the provisional marks of assessors, making decisions on the progression of individual students and making recommendations on final awards to Senate.

Centre for Academic Practice is the department within the University responsible for staff development relating to learning, teaching and assessment.

Collaborations Operations Group is a sub-committee of the Student Experience Committee with a remit to promote best practice in relation to academic collaboration and to improve co-ordination between different parts of the University in relation to the collaborations support.

Collaborative Programme denotes a Queen Margaret University award delivered in partnership with one or more external organisations, either in the UK or abroad.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is usually used in reference to modules or programmes aligned to the needs of professionals wanting to update their qualifications in order to enhance their practice.

Convener's Action Most important decisions (eg about student progress or an amendment to a module) can only be made with committee approval. However, sometimes an urgent decision can't wait until the next meeting. In such cases, the Convener of the committee / board may approve on behalf of the committee. (See also Homologation)

Credit Rating is defined as the process whereby QMU judges an external programme against the SCQF to assess equivalence of level and volume of credit. Credit rating allows a variety of organisations from outside the higher education system, to align their training to the SCQF, which helps students to use their qualifications towards a claim for Recognition of Prior Learning. The credit rating process differs from validation in that it does not lead to the award of credit or a qualification from the University.

Credits When a student passes a module they are awarded academic credit proportionate to the size of the module. A ten credit module is assumed to require one hundred hours of student effort.

Data Protection The Data Protection Act 1998 governs the storage and use of information about individual people, to make sure personal data are kept securely and confidentially. All University staff and students must comply with this Act.

Definitive Programme Document is the full and authoritative record of a validated academic programme, including its aims, learning outcomes, structure, management, regulations and individual module descriptors.

Diet is a term sometimes used to count the number of attempts a student makes at completing the assessments for a module. Students who have extenuating circumstances will often be allowed to retake an assessment 'as of the first diet', meaning it will count as their first attempt. A resit may be referred to as 'second diet'.

Direct entrants are students who enter an undergraduate programme at Level 2 or above.

Disability A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Includes mobility, sensory and learning difficulties.

Distance Learning is a mode of study enabling students to access University programmes without attending lectures, seminars and tutorials on site. Tutorial

material and assessments are provided by post, videoconference and/or electronically.

Dual Award defines arrangements under which the University collaborates with another awarding institution to provide learning programmes leading to separate awards made by both participants. The approval of such programmes will be conducted through the University's established procedures, and the programme will be subject to the quality assurance processes of Queen Margaret University. A Memorandum of Agreement will be required.

Employability has been defined as 'a set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen careers'. The higher education sector has been asked to consider how it can embed employability and other aspects of personal development into the student experience.

Enhancement Themes The Scottish higher education sector has agreed a programme of over-arching themes to inform research into good practice that can be shared between universities. <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/> (See also Quality Enhancement)

Enhancement-led Institution Review (ELIR) is the process by which the QAA reviews higher education institutions every five years. Reports are published on the QAA website: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/INSTITUTIONREPORTS/Pages/default.aspx>

Equality and Diversity are defined as stated below:

Equality is about breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal access and opportunities.

Diversity celebrates differences, both visible and invisible aspects, and values and harnesses individual potential; it is a given, not a choice.

QMU aims to promote entry to and provide education for all students, whatever their background and seeks to create equal opportunities regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

European Diploma Supplement (EDS) is a document provided for each student graduating from QMU. The EDS includes information on QMU and the Scottish higher education sector plus details of the student's programme and results. The EDS is intended to enhance understanding of different qualifications and facilitate transfer across European education systems.

Extenuating Circumstances are defined as circumstances beyond a student's control which prevent them from undertaking assessment at the set time or adversely affect their performance in assessment.

Extenuating Circumstances Panel is the body which meets after the University exam periods to consider student claims for extenuating circumstances in relation to those exams.

External Examiners assist Queen Margaret University in discharging its duty to ensure the quality and standard of its courses. In particular, they provide Queen Margaret University with informed and appropriate external reference points for the comparison of academic standards; offer independent, objective and impartial judgements on a range of matters, and provide professional advice and expertise in the form of findings and reports which are given serious consideration.

External Panellists are appointed to validation and review panels to provide subject expertise and impartial advice on the approval of programmes.

Feedback should be provided when marking an assignment so that the student can understand why they got the grade they did and to improve in future. QMU provides a choice of pro formas which markers may use. Audio feedback may also be provided.

Fitness to Practise refers to the suitability of healthcare professionals to work in their chosen profession, in relation to issues which are wider than academic qualifications. Fitness to Practise may be affected by health or disability issues, personal conduct, unprofessional behaviour or criminal convictions.

Formative Assessment is assessment which is undertaken purely to give feedback to students on how well they are doing. The mark does not count towards the student's final mark for the module.

Franchising is the process by which the Queen Margaret University agrees to authorise the provision of the whole or part of one or more of its own validated programmes by a partner organisation. In doing so, Queen Margaret University retains overall control of the programme's academic standards, content, delivery, assessment and quality assurance arrangements. The approval of such programmes will be conducted through the University's established procedures and a Memorandum of Agreement will be required.

Full Economic Cost (FEC) QMU uses a full economic costing model to determine the cost of developing and running projects and collaborative programmes. Full economic cost includes all staff costs, non-staff costs, directly allocated estates costs and indirect costs.

Governance and Quality Enhancement (GQE) is the division of the University Secretary's Group which is responsible for developing and implementing the University's quality assurance procedures and co-ordinating compliance with governance expectations. GQE also provides administrative support for research degrees. The division provides secretariat for most University committees and assists with the development of academic policies and regulations.

Grade descriptors define generic institutional criteria for marking examinations and coursework at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Graduate attributes define the generic qualities, skills and aptitudes which graduates of all QMU programmes should aim to acquire by the end of their studies. Graduate attributes are an attempt to capture the distinctive qualities of a graduate over and above the subject specific knowledge learnt as part of the degree.

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) is the national body which regulates the education and registration of allied health professionals. Pre-registration programmes in the allied health professions must be approved by the Health and Care Professions Council.

Homologation Sometimes a decision has to be made quickly without waiting for the next meeting of the committee responsible. In such cases the Convener will take Convener's action to approve. The decision is then recorded at the next meeting and 'homologated' (ie approved retrospectively) by the members of the committee.

The Hub is the University's virtual learning environment, used to support teaching and learning.

International Student Forum is a sub-committee of the Student Experience Committee with a remit to promote best practice in relation to international student support and facilitate co-ordination of activities across the University.

ISIS (Integrated Student Information System) is the name for the University's computerised student records system. The system stores each student's name, matriculation number, address and module marks, as well as other information required for regulatory purposes.

Joint Award describes arrangements under which the University collaborates with one or more awarding institutions to provide learning programmes leading to a single award made jointly by both, or all, participants. The approval of such programmes will be conducted through the University's established procedures, and the programme will be subject to the quality assurance and quality control processes of Queen Margaret University. Queen Margaret University and the partner institution(s) will normally jointly confer the award(s). A Memorandum of Agreement will be required.

Joint Board of Studies, is established for collaborative arrangements, and is responsible for the overall administration and monitoring of the collaboration, and ensuring that there is adequate ongoing communication between Queen Margaret University and the partner institution(s).

Key Information Sets are published in order to allow prospective students and employers to compare undergraduate courses at different universities. They include data on NSS results, employment statistics, contact hours and financial information. <https://unistats.direct.gov.uk/find-out-more/key-information-set>

Learning Outcomes are the outcomes of the learning process. The intended learning outcomes are stated in programme documents and specifications. These are statements describing what students should know or be able to do as a result of learning. Outcomes should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, realistic and time-limited). Outcomes may be categorised as knowledge and understanding, intellectual, professional, practical or transferable skills.

Learning Resource Centre (LRC) The LRC at the QMU campus provides electronic and physical access to Library and IT facilities and services.

Learning and Teaching Panel reports to the Student Experience Committee. The Learning and Teaching Panel makes decisions on behalf of Senate in relation to the quality assurance of programmes.

Level Descriptors are statements providing a broad indication of learning appropriate to attainment at a particular level, designed to support the assignment of specified learning outcomes to modules. Level descriptors are published as part of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework to guide staff, students, employers and other interested parties. <http://www.scqf.org.uk/The%20Framework/Level%20Descriptors>

Local Support Centre is a term used to describe an organisation that may provide services to support the delivery of Queen Margaret University awards offered by distance learning. Services provided by a local support centre may include

assistance with marketing and recruitment, the provision of physical facilities for guest lectures by Queen Margaret University staff, tutorial support and the provision of IT and other study aids.

Major Programme Change denotes a change between periodic reviews that substantially affects the title of the programme, its awards, its philosophy, its aims and objectives, its structure, its management or its programme regulations. A major change approval event is required.

Marking criteria A detailed breakdown of how marks are awarded for a particular assignment. This enables students and others to understand the reasons for the mark awarded. Marking criteria should relate to the Learning Outcomes.

Matriculation means the annual registration of students at the University. Normally students matriculate online, through the Student Portal. Students who have not matriculated will not appear on the student record system (ISIS), will not get access to Hub or the library and will not be able to have marks processed at the Board of Examiners.

Mature students are defined as those aged 21 or over when they started their studies.

Memorandum of Agreement is the agreement governing collaborative arrangements between the University and partner institutions. A signed Memorandum is required for each collaborative arrangement approved by the University.

Moderation is the process of confirming the consistency of the marks and feedback provided by the original marker(s). See the Assessment Regulations for detailed advice on the distinction between moderation and double marking.

Module is a unit of study in a defined area of knowledge, skills and/or understanding. Modules may be self-contained and stand alone, or may form part of a larger academic programme. A named module co-ordinator is responsible for arranging the delivery and assessment of the module. Each module must have a module descriptor. A standard presentation format is used, requiring staff to specify the level, size, learning outcomes and content.

Module Change denotes a modification to existing module descriptors including changes to the module title, to the content of individual modules, teaching practices and other modes of delivery, and the nature of assessments.

Module evaluation Towards the end of each module, the module co-ordinator must seek student feedback through a standardised module evaluation form. This helps to identify any improvements that can be made for the next iteration of the module.

National Student Survey (NSS) The NSS is a nationwide survey for final year undergraduate students at the UK's universities. It aims to provide a tool for comparing universities. Results are quoted as part of the Key Information Set published on the Unistats website.

Outcome Agreement The Scottish Funding Council negotiates an Outcome Agreement with each university. This sets targets that must be met as a condition of receiving funding from the Council.

Part-time Any student who is registered on less than 80 credits in an academic year is defined as part-time.

Partner Institution describes an institution or other body with which Queen Margaret University enters into an agreement to collaborate. The Partner Institution will normally be an institution or body that does not have degree awarding powers, but may on occasion be another awarding institution. A Memorandum of Agreement will be required.

Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) denotes the member of academic staff appointed as a point of contact and advice for each student on all matters relating to academic progress.

Personal Development Planning (PDP) provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their performance and planning for personal, academic and professional development. This may be done through an electronic portfolio such as Pebblepad.

Plagiarism The use of another person's words or ideas as if they were the writer's own. See: <https://sites.google.com/a/qmu.ac.uk/plagiarism/> for a full definition of different types of plagiarism, collusion and poor academic practice.

Portfolio Development Group The group of senior managers and other key staff who review new programme proposals and decide on behalf of the University whether they can proceed to validation.

Professional Doctorates are degrees which are equivalent to PhDs in terms of volume and level of work (SCQF level 12) but which are focussed on advanced professional development rather than research. Professional doctorates contain taught elements and a significant portion of work-based learning.

Programme is an approved curriculum followed by a registered student. This will normally be a named award route that leads to the intended learning outcomes in the relevant programme specification. It may be offered at different levels within a single subject or be multi-disciplinary. It may also refer to the main pathways through a modular scheme, which may itself include several subjects.

Programme Approval Form refers to the paperwork submitted to the University for approval in principle of a proposed new programme. The form is completed in three stages. (See Programme development, monitoring and review)

Programme Committee is the body responsible for the overall co-ordination of an academic programme subject to the overall policies, procedures and regulations of the subject area, school and University.

Programme Leader denotes the head of the programme team and convener of the programme committee. The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring the smooth and efficient operation of the programme.

Programme Specifications provide a statement about the intended learning outcomes of a particular programme, together with information about the teaching, learning and assessment methods used. The programme specification shows how the modules of study forming a programme relate to levels of achievement as recognised in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

Programme Team The Programme Team is responsible for developing a new programme. It is also responsible for the delivery of the approved programme.

Professional and Statutory Bodies (PSBs) are organisations that approve, recognise or otherwise regulate specific programmes in the context of the requirements for professional qualification. Some PSBs have a prescribed statutory responsibility to approve or recognise programmes and/or to determine the academic standards and professional or vocational components of such programmes.

QELTA Strategy The University's over-arching strategy for the quality enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment.

Quality Assurance is the means by which Queen Margaret University confirms that the conditions are in place for its students to achieve the standards set by the institution and professional accrediting bodies.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) is an independent body funded by subscriptions from universities and colleges of higher education, and through contracts with the main higher education funding bodies. Its mission is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications and to encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education. The QAA develops the quality framework for higher education and conducts periodic reviews of quality in institutions.

Quality Assurance Handbook is the procedural guide to arrangements for quality assurance of taught academic programmes for which the University is responsible, including those delivered by collaborative partners. The Quality Assurance Handbook is published on the Quality website. <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/qa/default.htm>

Quality Code for Higher Education sets out the expectations of best practice across the sector that all higher education institutions should meet. It is published and regularly updated by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). The QAA reviews how effectively institutions meet these expectations through Enhancement-led Institutional Review. <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx>

Quality Enhancement is the term used by the Scottish higher education sector to describe the culture in which institutions take deliberate steps to bring about continuous improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students. Quality enhancement arrangements subsume the University's quality assurance framework.

Recognition of Prior (Experiential or Certificated) Learning (RPL/RPCL/RPEL) is the process by which the University assesses individuals' learning and/or experience to give academic credit. Credit is given only where there is evidence that the experience or learning has resulted in the student achieving the appropriate and clearly expressed learning outcomes. Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning is the process by which students may be awarded credit for previous modules or degrees they have successfully completed. Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning is the process by which students may be awarded credit in recognition of learning achieved through experience, eg employment or voluntary work.

Registry See University Secretary's Group

Remote Access is the system whereby staff and students can use the University's IT systems from any location (using Citrix technology).

Repeat If a student fails a module both at the first attempt and at retrieval (see below) they will normally be offered the chance to retake the entire module again. This entails retaking all assessments (even those which they passed the first time). Normally, students who are repeating a module will be expected to attend classes.

Research Degrees Panel reports to the Research Strategy Committee. The Research Degrees Panel is responsible for deciding on business relating to the final awards of doctorate students.

Research Ethics Panel reports to the Research Strategy Committee. The Research Ethics Panel is responsible for considering requests for ethical approval which are not appropriate for approval by the Head of Division or Department. See <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/quality/rs/default.htm#ethics> for details.

Research Strategy Committee is a sub-committee of Senate with a remit to establish and review policies, strategies, and procedures that promote best practice in research and professional doctorate registration, education, supervision and examination, and that ensure that research conducted in the University complies with appropriate ethical standards.

Retrieval If a student fails an assessment at the first attempt they will normally be offered the chance to 'retrieve', i.e. re-attempt the part(s) of the module assessment which they failed. Also referred to as a 'resit', 'reassessment' or 'second diet'.

Review is the process whereby the progress of an existing programme is critically appraised after being in operation for several years. Reviews are conducted by a group, normally including external peers, who judge whether or not the programme remains academically and professionally valid and continues to meet the conditions of the awarding/accrediting body.

Risk Assessment This process is required for all collaborative partners. Risks relating to financial, legal and personal safety matters are considered, as well as those relating to academic quality. Once risks have been identified, actions to reduce or mitigate the risk must be proposed. Risk assessments are conducted for new partnerships and reported to the Portfolio Development Group as part of the process for approving new partners and programmes. Following this, risk assessments are updated annually. This allows the University to intervene proactively if risks increase or are not satisfactorily controlled.

Scheme is a coherent grouping of closely related programmes.

School Academic Boards are responsible for the implementation of academic quality assurance procedures within each School, including validation, monitoring, evaluation and review. They are also responsible for the provision of advice on educational development within the School.

School Office The group of administrative staff responsible for supporting day to day administration of academic programmes.

Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is the single unified framework of all nationally recognised qualifications in Scotland. The SCQF arranges qualifications in 12 levels and in three pathways, including Higher Education. The

purpose of the Framework is to enable employers, learners and others to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications and how they relate to each other. QMU awards are at the following levels:

Level 1 (undergraduate)	SCQF Level 7
Level 2 (undergraduate)	SCQF Level 8
Level 3 (undergraduate)	SCQF Level 9
Level 4 (undergraduate)	SCQF Level 10
Masters	SCQF Level 11
PhD / Professional Doctorate	SCQF Level 12

Senate determines and makes arrangements for the implementation of policy relating to aspects of the academic work of the University. This includes the overall planning, co-ordination, development and supervision of the academic work of Queen Margaret University. It is also has formal and legal responsibility for all academic awards made in the name of the University. A full description of its remit, composition, and duties can be found in the Governance and Regulations.

Short Programme is one or more credit rated modules, grouped together for Continual Professional Development (CPD) or for general education purposes, which do not, in themselves, lead to an award or recordable qualification of Queen Margaret University. Short Programmes typically comprise one or more modules at SCQF level seven or above, usually up to a maximum of 60 credits. Short Programmes are designed to meet a particular demand and do not contribute to a previously validated programme.

Student Diary and Handbook published annually and provided for all new students contains information on student life at QMU, and indicates where further information on academic regulations and key policies may be found.

Student Experience Committee is a sub-committee of Senate, with a remit to establish and review strategies, policies and procedures that support and enhance the student experience, that assure and enhance academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience, and promote best practice in curricula, learning and teaching and in the support of students. A full description of the remit, composition, and duties can be found in the Governance and Regulations.

Student Portal A section of the QMU website that allows students to matriculate online, update their name and address details and view their marks. Students need to know their QMU student number and password to log on.

<http://www.qmu.ac.uk/portal/default.htm>

Student Retention All universities are required to collect statistics on the number of students who withdraw from their programme without receiving their intended award. QMU aims to support students to stay on their programme and complete successfully.

Student Staff Consultative Committee is the forum for students to raise and discuss matters relating to programmes with their academic tutors.

Student surveys In addition to the National Student Survey, the University conducts surveys of all students who are not captured by the NSS. This data is analysed alongside the NSS results.

Subject Benchmarks are explicit national statements of academic standards or outcomes for individual subjects. Benchmark information of this type provides a reference point against which outcomes can be measured. The QAA has developed benchmarks in a range of subject groupings as part of its national quality enhancement/assurance process.

Summative Assessment refers to assessment which counts towards the student's final mark for the module.

Transcript is a document summarising student results. Transcripts are provided for each Programme leading to an award of the University and also for Short Programmes or modules leading to the award of academic credit.

TurnitinUK Software which checks for plagiarism. See <https://sites.google.com/a/qmu.ac.uk/plagiarism/> for details.

University Court The Court is the overall governing body for the University. It delegates operational responsibility to senior managers and responsibility for academic standards to Senate. The Court is composed mostly of external members who act as overseers to ensure the University is using public funds effectively and meeting the needs of the community.

The University Secretary is the senior manager responsible for the governance and professional administration of the University. She acts as Secretary to the University Court and Senate and as Academic Registrar.

The University Secretary's Group comprises three divisions which deal with the central administration of QMU's academic activities. Collectively, these areas may be referred to as 'Registry'. The three divisions are:

- Registry and Academic Administration (student records, matriculation, graduation, exams, School Office)
- Governance and Quality Enhancement (see above)
- External Liaison and Student Services (recruitment and admissions, widening participation, international student support and student services)

Validation is the process whereby the University approves new academic programmes through a critical peer appraisal. The validation process will seek to ensure that proposed programmes are consistent with the University's strategic direction, that aims and learning outcomes are appropriate, that the level of is consistent with award outcomes, and that the student experience is likely to be positive.

Virtual Learning Environment A web-based system of supporting learning. It can be used to deliver a course by distance learning or to complement face-to-face teaching. QMU currently uses a Blackboard system for this purpose, known as the Hub.

Widening participation refers to efforts to increase student recruitment from previously under-represented groups, such as people from lower socio-economic groups, ethnic minorities, looked after children and mature students. In common with other universities, QMU is set targets within our Outcome Agreement in relation to widening participation.