Awards Titles Framework

Table of Contents

1   Overview

The award title of all new programmes of study at the University of Limerick (UL) should align with the framework outlined in this document. This framework has been developed following a review of existing award titles and the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). As a sub-committee of Academic Council, the Academic Programme Review Committee (APRC) will consider, on a case-by-case basis, proposals for alternative award titles where it is demonstrated that the title being proposed is appropriate to the programme being considered.

2   Programmes of study leading to awards approved by Academic Council

The UL Academic Council approves the entry requirements, programmes of study and award titles of all degrees, diplomas and certificates that are offered by the University. Each student's performance is considered at the University Exam Board, and award recommendations are then considered at the next meeting of Academic Council.

Learners who successfully complete major, minor, supplemental or special-purpose awards receive a University of Limerick parchment fixed with the UL seal and endorsed by the UL President and Provost & Deputy President. Graduands in receipt of major, minor, supplemental or special-purpose awards are conferred at the next scheduled conferring ceremony. Unless otherwise approved by the Provost & Deputy President, graduands in receipt of awards of less than 30 credits are conferred in absentia. Graduands in receipt of awards of 30 credits or greater will be invited to receive their award at the conferring ceremony. (Refer to Appendix 1 for definitions of major, minor, supplemental and special-purpose awards.)

2.1   Research programmes leading to UL awards

Award title (approved by Academic Council)	Level (NFQ)	Type	Nominal credits[1]
Doctor of Philosophy (Structured PhD)	10	Major	300
Doctor of Philosophy	10	Major	270
Doctor of Philosophy (*Named Discipline*)	10	Major	270
Professional Doctorate (*Named Discipline*)	10	Major	270
Master of Arts	9	Major	180
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	9	Major	180
Master of Engineering	9	Major	180
Master of Science (Structured)	9	Major	180
Master of Science	9	Major	180
Master of Surgery	9	Major	90
Master of Technology	9	Major	180

Note: Awards at research level are unclassified.

---

[1] Credits refer to ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) credits.

2.2 Taught postgraduate programmes leading to UL awards

Award title (approved by Academic Council)	Level (NFQ)	Type	Minimum credits
Professional Master of Education (*Named Discipline*)	9	Major	120
Master of Science in (*Named Discipline*) (Professional Qualification)	9	Major	180
Master of Arts in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Major	90
Master of Architecture	9	Major	90
Master of Business Administration	9	Major	120
Master of Business Studies in *(Named Discipline)*	9	Major	90
Master of Education in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Major	90
Master of Engineering in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Major	90
Master of Laws	9	Major	90
Master of Science in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Major	90
Master of Taxation	9	Major	90
Master of Technology in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Major	90
Graduate Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Major	60
Postgraduate Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Major	60
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Minor	60
Professional Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Minor	30
Postgraduate Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Minor	30
Graduate Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Minor	30
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Minor	6
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Special-purpose	60
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Special-purpose	6
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Supplemental	60
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Supplemental	6

Note: Awards at taught postgraduate level are classified as follows: first class, second class grade 1, second class grade 2 and third class.

2.3   Undergraduate programmes leading to UL awards

Award title (approved by Academic Council)	Level (NFQ)	Type	Minimum credits
Bachelor of Architecture	8	Major	300
Bachelor of Arts in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Major	240
Bachelor of Business Studies	8	Major	240
Bachelor of Business Studies with (*Named Subject*)	8	Major	240
Bachelor of Education in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Major	240
Bachelor of Engineering in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Major	240
Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery	8	Major	240
Bachelor of Laws	8	Major	240
Bachelor of Science in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Major	240
Bachelor of Technology in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Major	240
Higher Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Major	60
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Minor	60
Professional Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Minor	60
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Minor	6
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Special-purpose	60
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Special-purpose	6
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Supplemental	60
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Supplemental	6
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	7	Major	150
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	7	Minor	60
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	7	Minor	6
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	7	Special-purpose	60
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	7	Special-purpose	6
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	7	Supplemental	60
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	7	Supplemental	6
Higher Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	6	Major	120
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	6	Minor	60
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	6	Minor	6
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	6	Special-purpose	60
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	6	Special-purpose	6
Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	6	Supplemental	60
Certificate in (*Named Discipline*)	6	Supplemental	6

Note: Awards at undergraduate level are classified as follows: first class, second class grade 1, second class grade 2 and third class.

2.4   Exit routes leading to UL awards

2.4.1   Exit awards related to Professional Accreditation Related Elements (PARE)

Exit awards may be made available to students who have enrolled on professionally accredited programmes and cannot proceed to the next stage of their programme of study due to professional accreditation requirements. Course boards should consider including exit routes for students in cases where the opportunity to repeat a component of the programme is restricted. The relevant regulations related to PARE and the programmes this policy applies to are outlined in section 3.7.1 of the UL [Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures](#).

2.4.2   Exit awards related to early exit from programme of study

As approved by Academic Council in June 2009, course boards should also consider making exit awards available to students registered on taught master's programmes of study who have completed at least 60 nominated credits of study unless otherwise stated by Academic Council. In such cases, the student cannot re-present for the master's degree within the same academic year.

2.4.3   General guidelines

Academic Council considers the provision of exit awards on an individual-case basis. When doing so, Academic Council ensures that the title of an exit award is clearly differentiated from that of the programme the student originally enrolled on. The table below provides *examples* of exit award titles that are currently approved by Academic Council.

Exit award title (approved by Academic Council)[2]	Level (NFQ)	Type	Credits
Master of (*Subject Area[3])* in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Major	≥90
Graduate Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Major	≥60 – <90
Professional Diploma in (*Named Discipline*)	9	Minor	≥30
Bachelor of (*Subject Area*) Hons in (*Named Discipline*)	8	Major	≥240
Bachelor of (*Subject Area*) in (*Named Discipline*)	7	Major	≥180 – <240
Diploma in (*Subject Area*)	7	Minor	≥120 – <180
Certificate in (*Subject Area*)	7	Minor	≥60 – <120

Note: Exit awards are classified as follows: first class, second-class grade 1, second-class grade 2 and third class.

2.5   Existing programme titles that will no longer be approved

There are current UL programmes that have been approved by Academic Council that no longer fit with the current framework. These titles will no longer be available for new programmes by default. Programmes that use award titles that do not appear in this document will be required to align with the standard award titles in the future and should consider such alignment during the course review process.

---

[2] The combined elements of the exit award title must represent the achievement of the student on the original programme but the title must be clearly different to the award title of the original programme.
[3] For example, Architecture, Arts, Business, Education, Engineering, Science, Technology.

Academic Council will consider, on a case-by-case basis, a detailed proposal for alternative award titles where it can be demonstrated that the current titles are unsuitable and the title being proposed is appropriate to the programme being considered.

3   Collaboration with other institutions

It is UL policy to promote collaboration with other institutions to enhance our students' programmes and learning experiences. The nature of collaboration includes:

- Student exchange programmes: Examples include Erasmus agreements, where students undertake a programme of study (normally at least one semester) in a partner institution. In conjunction with the Erasmus coordinator, course directors should ensure that modules taken and grades obtained are approved in accordance with UL's academic regulations.
- Joint and dual degree awards: UL supports links and collaborations with higher education institutions and industry partners. Where appropriate and in line with UL's strategic goals, the University will enter into agreement, on a case-by-case basis, with partner higher education institutions for accrediting and awarding taught joint or dual degree awards to students who undertake their degree studies at UL and at such partner institutions. See the Joint and Dual Degree Awards Policy for more information.

4   Professional Education Studies

UL recognises that learners may wish, for personal or professional purposes, to register for approved modules or participate in other forms of learning that do not lead to UL awards approved by Academic Council. Such learning can be classified as accredited or non-accredited.

The Graduate and Professional Studies (GPS) division sets the direction for professional education at UL and manages the development and delivery of UL's professional education programmes. The GPS division uses a hybrid model: academic schools/departments retain ownership of programmes and academic material, and the division provides the support, procedures and processes that enable the seamless delivery of world-class continuing and professional education.

4.1   University Certificate of Study/Certificate of Completion (accredited learning)

Learners who register for modules accredited by Academic Council but do not enrol on a programme of study that leads to an award approved by Academic Council are registered on the generic programme title 'University Certificate of Study' (previously referred to as 'Link-in Occasional'). After they have completed their modules, learners are issued with a transcript of their results and, in some cases, with a Certificate of Completion (designated purpose) issued by GPS in collaboration with the module leader and/or head of school/department. The transcript will act as a record of the accredited modules taken by the learner during the academic year. Because the modules do not constitute a programme of study, award classification does not apply.

Before considering an applicant's application to register for a module, the module leader will take cognisance of both the learner's level of educational achievement and available capacity on the module. A learner wishing to register for more than 24 credits on a UL programme must seek the approval of the programme's course director.

The grades attained are approved by the UL Academic Council Grading Committee. While the University Certificate of Study does not constitute an award of the University, the resultant transcript records the achievement of learners in approved modules. At the end of each academic year, learners will receive a transcript showing: (i) that they were registered on a University Certificate of Study; (ii) the modules they had registered for during the previous academic years; and (iii) the grades attained. As the learning and grades in each module are accredited by the University, learners may use these grades when seeking entry to or credit towards any programme they wish to enrol on in the future.

4.2 Certificate of Attendance (non-accredited learning)

Learners may wish to avail of education, training or continuing professional development programmes that are independent of awards approved by the Academic Council of the University. Learners may take such programmes (or their employers may wish them to do so) to enhance their personal or professional development or employment prospects or to meet professional registration requirements. Where UL does not provide an approved award or accredited module to meet these requirements or where the nature of the learning programme does not meet the requirements of a UL award, a programme of study to address the learners' needs may be developed and approved by the GPS division in collaboration with the head of the school/department delivering the learning.

After a learner has successfully completed the programme, the learner may receive a Certificate of Attendance (designated purpose, e.g., Summer Schools). In collaboration with the school/department, GPS will be responsible for designing and developing the certificates but may not produce the certificates on UL parchment paper. Because the Certificate of Attendance (designated purpose) is not a programme approved by Academic Council, students will not be considered at the University Exam Board or have their certificates presented at UL conferring ceremonies.

Where the education and training programme offered by GPS/school/department includes an approved UL module, GPS/school/department will ensure that the learner is registered for the approved module. In addition to receiving the Certificate of Attendance, a learner who registers for approved modules will receive an official UL transcript detailing his/her performance in the approved modules only and may also receive a Certificate of Completion.

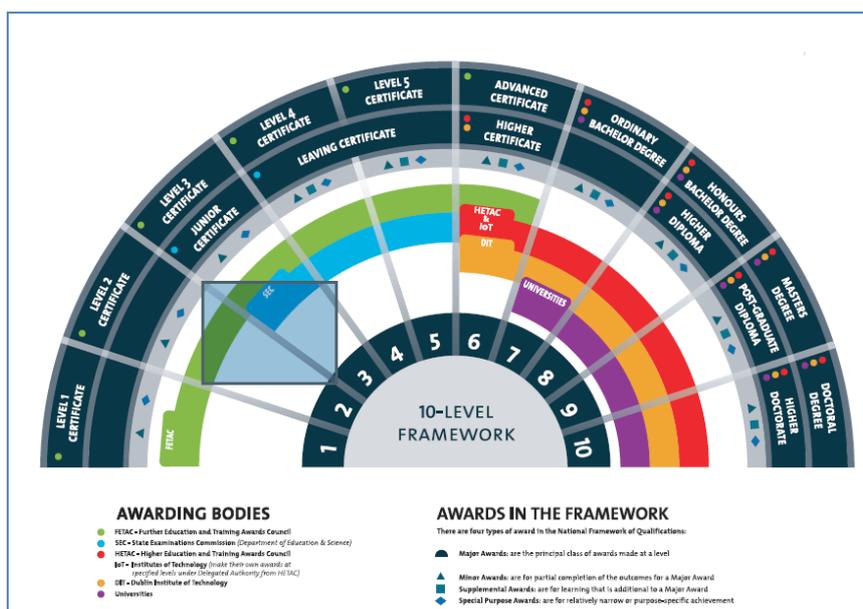## Appendix 1: National Framework of Qualifications

It is national and University of Limerick (UL) policy that all programmes be classified under the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The 10 levels of qualification in the framework range from Level 1 certificate programme to Level 10 doctoral programme. The university sector is responsible for providing awards in the Level 7 to Level 10 range; in addition, awards at Level 5 and Level 6 may be awarded where they are part of a progression process to a Level 8 award.

In 2009, to promote student mobility in undertaking further education programmes and as part of the Bologna process, the Irish university sector produced and agreed guidelines with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (now QQI [Quality and Qualifications Ireland]). It should be noted that a number of UL award titles that existed prior to the publication of the agreed guidelines do not follow the QQI guidelines.

Research master's and doctoral degrees were not considered in the agreed guidelines, although most universities have assigned credits to these awards.

Award types:
- Major awards have volume and breadth and are the principal class of award made at a level.
- Minor awards are associated with a major award and represent part completion of the major award but have relevance in their own right.
- Supplemental awards are for learners who already have a major award and may need training and updating as part of continuing professional development (CPD).
- Special-purpose awards have a narrow focus and are associated with legislative, regulatory, economic, social or personal learning requirements.

Document Control

Document Version	1.2
Document Owner	Provost & Deputy President
Approved by	Academic Council
Date	3 March 2021
Effective Date	3 March 2021
Amended by	Academic Regulations Committee
Amendment Date	5 January 2021
Amendments	• New cover sheet • 'Vice President Academic & Registrar' changed to 'Provost & Deputy President' • Updated web link • Addition of Document Control box
Amended by	Academic Programme Review Committee
Amendment Date	11 February 2021
Amendments	• Replacing of 'Specialist Diploma' with 'Professional Diploma' • Replacing of 'Continued and Professional Education' with 'Professional Education Studies or Graduate and Professional Studies' and 'CPE' with 'GPS' • Removal of approval date on page 6 as captured in document control table. • Updating of document control table.
Formal Review Date	March 2023