

Procedure 2.2 Academic regulations

1 Introduction

These regulations comprise the rules for the construction, operation and assessment of higher education undergraduate level and postgraduate level programmes at the Academy. Every higher education student must, as part of their studies, familiarise themselves with these regulations, since they explain:

- the Academy's admissions procedure
- the Academy's academic and modular structure
- the Academy's assessment regulations

The Academy's academic committee framework is set out in Procedure 1.3

To help students understand the procedures, during the induction period of their qualifications, programme coordinators must introduce and explain the key points from the academic regulations.

These regulations must also be read in conjunction with the relevant Academy policies and procedures. In addition these regulations reflect the QAA *Framework for higher education qualifications* and the *UK Quality Code*.

The regulations are binding on Academy staff and external examiners in those matters which the regulations determine. Contravention of them may result in action against the member(s) of staff concerned under the Academy's misconduct procedure.

2 Admission to Academy higher education programmes

The Academy aims to provide the opportunity for access to higher education for all students who have demonstrated the potential to benefit from the higher education programme to which they have applied. Whilst it is possible for students to benefit from a higher education experience without successfully completing a programme, '*potential to benefit*' is here used to mean potential successfully to complete an identified programme of study. The principal aim of the admissions process is the identification of potential to benefit, by providing evidence that indicates a reasonable expectation of achieving the specific award associated with an identified programme of study.

The Academy admissions process (see Policy 4 *Student admissions* and related procedures) is designed to ensure that all applicants, including those from backgrounds where members of the family have not previously entered higher education, have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their potential to benefit educationally.

These include certificated minimum entry requirements and non-certificated entry at the Application stage.

3 Application stage

All applications to the Academy will be reviewed to ascertain if they provide sufficient evidence of potential to benefit in relation to the minimum entry requirements of the programme of study to which the application relates.

4 Admission stage

All applications that meet the minimum entry requirements of the programme of study applied for are entitled to proceed. This stage is designed to provide additional opportunities to demonstrate potential to benefit through a range of other methods such as interview, portfolio and admissions tests. The specific details of admission stage procedures will vary and will reflect the specific academic subject and level of the programme to which an application relates.

5 Non-certificated entry

Applications will be considered that seek to demonstrate potential to benefit through non-certificated prior experiential learning. Such applications need to demonstrate that prior learning is equivalent to that which is required by the minimum certificated entry requirements. This will usually only apply to mature students (over 21) who are able to identify, at the application stage, that they have relevant and significant prior experience that provides evidence of potential to benefit by achieving the learning outcomes of the programme and attaining the standard of the award.

6 Undergraduate level Diploma or Certificate minimum entry requirements

The admission stage will provide appropriate opportunities further to establish this potential to benefit. Applicants whose qualifications do not conform to the standard entry requirements detailed below will be considered on merit. The applicant must be capable of operating at the appropriate undergraduate or postgraduate level. Relevant vocational, professional or other experience will be taken into account.

Full recognition will be given to recognition of prior learning (RPL), as described in regulations governing recognition of prior learning by awarding organisations and also reflected in QAA guidance. See Procedure 4.3 *Recognition of prior learning procedures*.

The possession of the achievement entry requirements guarantees the offer of a place. Each programme has its own entry requirements which are clearly stated in the academic prospectus as well as the Academy website.

7 Postgraduate level Diploma or Certificate minimum entry requirements

Each programme has its own entry requirements which are clearly stated in the academic prospectus as well as the Academy website.

8 Academic structure

Each academic cohort of study normally consists of four semesters that are 13 weeks in duration. The semesters are means of dividing the cohort into units of study depending on the number of the programmes.

The first and last week of each semester are normally used for procedures such as induction, tutorials, assessment, review and administration. The remaining 8 weeks of each semester consist of direct programme delivery. Students must attend for the full 32 weeks of the academic year.

The Academy's academic structure supports full-time routes to most higher education qualifications. The length of these programmes may vary according to the qualification. For example, full-time level 7 study normally operates over a minimum of 1 academic year.

9 Levels of study

As a student progresses to each level of study on a higher education programme, the level of the work presents a greater academic challenge than the previous one. For example, at undergraduate level this is often reflected in the fact that students are progressively given a greater role in the planning, organisation and direction of their studies. They are also expected to demonstrate an increasing sophistication in their contextual awareness, analytical and technical skills.

9.1 Undergraduate levels of study

There are three levels of undergraduate study: Certificate (Level 4), Diploma (Level 5); degree (Level 6).

9.2 Postgraduate levels of study

The Academy delivers higher education programmes up to level 7, which is the equivalent of Masters level. This level includes Postgraduate Awards, Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas.

10 Module types

All programmes of study offered by the Academy are made up of different types and combinations of modules. Modules fall into three complementary categories: *Core*, *Mandatory* or *Designate*.

Core modules often referred to as 'specialist' or 'prescribed' or 'compulsory' modules have been developed to be taken by all students following a particular programme of study. These modules are designed to offer students the underpinning knowledge necessary to progress with their studies.

Mandatory modules are not only prescribed, like core modules, owing to their providing the underpinning knowledge, but a pass in them is required as a condition to taking certain other modules subsequently. If they are not passed the student cannot progress to certain other modules. If the latter are themselves core, then the student will not be able to complete the award.

These do not feature in degree structures to present unnecessary hurdles for students. They are only permitted on two grounds:

- 1) where the knowledge or skills they contain are necessary to be able to study other requisite parts of the course;
- 2) where another external validating body requires them to meet the requirements for professional recognition.
- 3) *Designate modules* are offered within programmes to enhance student choice and enable students to add breadth to their studies. These modules are normally offered as a required choice from a range of options at a specific stage, semester or level of a programme of study.

11 Mode of study

All undergraduate and postgraduate level programmes in the Academy are offered in the full-time mode.