

Introduction and scope

1. This section sets out the credit framework adopted by SGUL. It:
 - a) explains the purpose of the credit framework (paragraph 7),
 - b) explains how learning activities are credit rated (paragraphs 8 to 14),
 - c) Specifies the credit values of the programmes that lead to SGUL awards (paragraph 15),
 - d) includes definitions of credit-related terminology in current usage (paragraphs 16 to 22).
2. One purpose of credit framework is to recognise the prior learning of students to enable student mobility between programmes and institutions. This section also sets limits on the recognition of prior learning that are needed to assure the standards of SGUL awards (paragraph 23).
3. The credit framework is an enabling framework. Although all programmes must align with the credit values articulated in table 1, programme teams are not required to recognise prior learning. Where programme teams wish to do so, this section includes an outline methodology for considering applications from students and potential students.
4. Information and guidance published by the QAA and other sector bodies is referred to as appropriate.
5. Prior learning of students may be recognised through institutional agreements. Examples are:
 - a) Articulation Agreements, that is, the credit-rating of an external programme and/or qualification to facilitate progression to an SGUL programme;
 - b) Progression Agreements, that is, an agreement between SGUL and an external provider to recognise alternative entry pathways to SGUL programmes.
6. The quality assurance arrangements for activities of this kind are set out in the Section of this Manual on Collaborative Provision (section E).

The purpose of the SGUL credit framework

7. Credit frameworks can¹:
 - a) acknowledge, codify and provide clarity about the relative demand and level of diverse HE and professional development qualifications
 - b) provide a 'route map' showing progression routes to enable students to navigate personal learning pathways more easily
 - c) facilitate the accreditation of small amounts of measurable learning which can build confidence and encourage further learning
 - d) enable students to interrupt their studies and/or transfer more easily between and within institutions, while maintaining a verified record of achievements (credit transcript) to date
 - e) provide a common language supporting curriculum development within and between HEIs
 - f) support the achievement of consistent student workloads across programmes within different disciplines
 - g) encourage and facilitate partnerships between institutions

¹ [Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Advice on Academic Credit Arrangements](#)

- h) facilitate students' entry to an international education arena where national credit frameworks can be recognised as a passport to mobility.

Credit rating

8. Credit is awarded to students who can demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes for a learning activity by successfully completing the assessment tasks for that activity. In programmes that have adopted a formal modular structure, credit is awarded to students who have met the learning outcomes for the module.
9. The credit value for the learning activity is based on an estimate of the notional hours of learning that it will take the typical student to complete the learning activity and demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes. The estimate of notional hours of learning includes formal teaching sessions, preparation for these sessions, directed and self-directed study and the completion of assessments.
10. One credit represents 10 notional hours of learning.
11. The modular structure at SGUL is based on a standard 15 credit taught module representing 150 hours of notional learning and/or a standard 30 credit taught module representing 300 hours of notional learning. Programme designers can make use of other module sizes (for example 10 and 20 credit modules) if it is appropriate to do so.
12. The credit rating of project modules is variable depending of the nature of the award. Typically,
 - a) an undergraduate project has a credit rating of 30 or 45 credits at level 6;
 - b) an MSc project has a credit rating of 45 or 60 credits at level 7;
 - c) An MRes project has a credit rating of 105 credits at level 7.
13. Credit is awarded at one of the following levels: 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. This numeric scale is used to indicate the relative demand, complexity, depth of learning and learner autonomy of the learning activity. Level 4 is typically associated with the first year of undergraduate study. Level 8 is typically associated with doctoral research².
14. Credit rating is the process of assigning to a module, part of a programme or an award a number of credits at a specified level. Credit rating usually occurs when a module or programme is validated.

Credit values for programmes that lead to SGUL awards

15. This section draws on information and guidance published by the QAA and other sector bodies and references that information and guidance as appropriate.

² The Southern England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (SEEC) publishes [level descriptors](#). The SEEC level descriptors offer guidance on how the learning outcomes can be articulated at each level.

Table 1 Credit values for programmes that lead to SGUL awards

Qualification	FHEQ level ³	Minimum credits	Minimum credits at the level of the qualification
PhD, MD(Res)	8	Not typically credit rated	Not typically credit rated
MPhil	7	Not typically credit rated	Not typically credit rated
MA, MSc, MRes	7	180	150
MSci	7	480	120
MBBS	7	Not typically credit rated	Not typically credit rated
PgDip	7	120	90
PgCert	7	60	40
BSc with honours	6	360	90
BSc ⁴	6	300	60
Graduate Diploma	6	80	80
Graduate Certificate	6	60	60
FdSc	5	240	90
Undergraduate Diploma/DipHE	5	240	90
Undergraduate Certificate/CertHE	4	120	90
Foundation Certificate	Not aligned to FHEQ	120	120

Recognition of prior learning: terms and concepts

16. **Advanced Standing and Credit Transfer** is used in the General Regulations for Students and Programmes of Study (GR3.7) to describe the admission to the second or third year of a first degree programme or the second year of a DipHE or Undergraduate Diploma programme and exemption from any assessments in those years on the basis of a prior qualification or previous study in appropriate subjects equivalent to one or two years' study as appropriate.
17. This section uses the terminology now promulgated by the QAA in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The [UK Quality Code](#) (Advice and Guidance: Assessment, Nov 2018) refers to the **recognition of prior learning (RPL)**. The term 'recognition' - which reflects the terminology in many European countries - is used instead of 'accreditation' to describe two widely recognised forms: **prior experiential (or informal) learning and prior certificated learning**.
18. **Prior experiential learning** is used to describe learning and achievement that occurred at some time in the past prior to entry to a programme of study. Prior experiential learning has not typically taken place in the context of formal education or training. The recognition of prior experiential learning involves a process managed by SGUL academic staff that results in the award of credit after the learning has been assessed. The essential feature of this process is that it is the learning gained through experience which is being assessed, not the experience itself.
19. **Prior certificated learning** relates to prior learning (such as professional development awards or employment-based awards) which is at higher education level but which has not led to the award of credits or qualifications positioned on the relevant higher education qualifications

³ [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#)

⁴ SGUL has two models: 120 credits at level 6 (for a top up) and 60 at level 6 as an exit award from an honours programme and MBBS

framework. Again, formal assessment enables a decision to be made about whether the learning is suitable for recognition.

20. Where the credits or qualification have been awarded by a UK higher education degree-awarding body in accordance with the [relevant higher education qualifications framework](#), such an award is addressed through the process of **credit transfer**. With credit transfer, no assessment is required. The status of the award (including consideration of its volume and level) and its relevance to the SGUL programme on which the student is studying will need to be verified.
21. **General credit** is the credit rating (in terms of value and level) assigned by the higher education provider that delivered, assessed and certificated the learning.
22. **Specific credit** is the amount of credit that is recognised by SGUL as suitable for meeting the requirements of an SGUL award following a verification process. The specific credit value may be less than the general credit value if the learning that is recognised does not fully align to the SGUL programme for which recognition has been sought.

Limitations on transfer credit

23. The limitations on credit transfer are intended to ensure the coherence, currency and validity of awards conferred by SGUL. The limitations also ensure that the learning experience and achievements of students who achieve the same award at the same time are broadly comparable. With this as context, the following limitations on credit transfer and prior certificated learning apply. These limitations do not apply to prior experiential learning or work-based learning.

Claims

24. Applications for the recognition of prior learning will normally be made against module learning outcomes or programme learning outcomes. Students may also submit claims if they have completed modules that are generally relevant to the programme learning outcomes without aligning exactly⁵.

Limitations on credit volumes

25. At least half of the credit required for an SGUL award will normally be accumulated as a result of learning assessed at St George's.
26. Exceptionally, transfer credit may exceed 50% of the credit required for an award. Credit will never exceed two thirds of the credit required for the award.
27. In all cases when transfer credit in excess of one half of the credit required for the award is granted, all the credit for the award must be accumulated within any specified maximum period

⁵ For example, a student on BSc Health Care Practice may have completed a breast cancer care module at level 6. Breast cancer care may not be available within the selection of option modules within the programme and the learning outcomes for the module may not align exactly with the HCP programme learning outcomes. Despite this, a credit claim can be considered because the module outcomes are generally relevant to the HCP programme aims and purpose.

of registration as specified in the Programme Regulations for that award. This need not apply if less than 50% transfer credit is requested.

Table 2 Limitations on credit transfer

Qualification	FHEQ level	Typical credits	Maximum credit transfer allowance
PhD, MD(Res)	8	Not typically credit rated	n/a
MPhil	7	Not typically credit rated	n/a
MA, MSc, MRes	7	180	120
MSci	7	480	n/a
MBBS	7	Not typically credit rated	n/a
PgDip	7	120	60
PgCert	7	60	30
BSc with honours	6	360	240
BSc with honours (top up)	6	120	60
BSc	6	300	n/a
Graduate Diploma	6	80	40
FdSc	5	240	120
Undergraduate Diploma/DipHE	5	240	120
Undergraduate Certificate/CertHE	4	120	60
Foundation Certificate	Not aligned to the FHEQ	120	n/a

Currency

28. When credit transfer in excess of one half of the credit required for the award is granted, the credit will normally have been awarded within five years of registration at SGUL. This need not apply if less than 50% transfer credit is requested.

Kingston University credit

29. Credit awarded for the completion of FHSCE modules and programmes delivered and assessed under the validation arrangements of Kingston University is not considered as external credit for credit transfer purposes.

30. Credit awarded by other Faculties of Kingston University may also not be considered as external credit for credit transfer purposes in circumstances agreed by the Board of Examiners and articulated in the programme regulations.

Classification arrangements

31. Marks and grades allocated by an external body will not be used to inform decisions taken by SGUL regarding honours degree classifications and eligibility for the award of a distinction.

“Double counting”

32. Double counting is the use of the same allocation of credit in order to meet the requirements of more than one academic award at the same level. “Double counting” is permitted in the following circumstances:

- a) where the learning outcomes for programmes leading to the awards are closely aligned. For example, if a student has been awarded a PgDip in a health related discipline at SGUL or at another institution, the student may be permitted to use credit to meet the requirements of a master’s degree in healthcare at SGUL. Where the double counting of credit is permitted, the currency of the credit in respect of the credit must be confirmed (paragraph 23 refers).
- b) In the context of “top up” arrangements that facilitate double counting to meet the requirements of more than one academic award at a different academic level. Examples are top ups from a Foundation Degree to a degree with honours and from a DipHE/Undergraduate Diploma to an ordinary or honours degree
- c) To facilitate the well-established arrangement that enables intercalating medical students to achieve an honours degree on the basis of the accumulation of 120 credits at level 6.

33. It is the role of the RPL panel (or equivalent body, see Appendix 1) to determine whether a transfer credit allocation is in breach of the restrictions on double-counting.

Rescinding awards

34. If the same allocation of credit is used to meet the requirements of more than one academic award, the first award will not be rescinded.

Processes and methodology

35. The RPL process used on the MSc Healthcare Practice programme is included as an appendix.

Timescales

36. Credit transfer claims can be considered as part of the application process or after commencement of a programme of study. Course teams that invite RPL claims are expected to include indicative timescales in the guidance provided to students and potential students.

Appeals

37. Appeals against credit transfer claims will be considered under the procedure for representations from assessment candidates.

Sources of advice

38. Advice about academic credit and the recognition of prior learning is available from the Quality and Partnerships Directorate

Appendix 1: Illustrative RPL Process

