Academic Curriculum Framework

Version Number 1.0

Effective from September 2026

Owner: Academic Registry
Author: Quality Management Office

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The Academic Curriculum Framework sets out the University's design principles, requirements and expectations for programmes leading to an award or credit of the University of Salford.

1.2 It applies to all programmes leading to an award or credit and informs the design, delivery, assessment and review of University awards.

1.3 The Framework supports compliance with the Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes and associated policies and procedures

2.0 Scope

2.1 This Framework applies to all programmes leading to an award or credit of the University of Salford, including programmes delivered through franchise arrangements and other forms of collaborative provision It governs:

- programme design and development;
- programme approval, validation and revalidation;
- programme amendment and review; and
- programme delivery and assessment

2.2 For programmes governed by Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), the relevant PSRB requirements shall take precedence, subject to approval through University governance processes

3.0 Policy Statements

3.1 Status of the Framework

3.1.1 The Academic Curriculum Framework sets out the University's requirements and expectations for the design, approval, delivery and review of programmes leading to University awards and credit.

3.1.2 The Framework should be read alongside:

- Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes;
- Assessment and Feedback Policy;
- Collaborative Provision Policy and Procedures; and
- Other relevant Academic Handbook policies and procedures.

3.1.3 The Framework contains both mandatory requirements and statements of normal practice:

- Must indicates a mandatory requirement.
- Should indicates the University's normal expectation.
- May indicates a permitted option.
- Will indicates an institutional commitment.

3.1.4 Any exception to a mandatory requirement within this Framework must be approved through the appropriate University process and documented within programme validation documentation.

3.2 Awards and Programme Structures

3.2.1 Awards may be approved as single honours, joint honours or combined honours awards.

3.2.2 Joint honours awards comprise two subjects studied in equal proportions and will normally use "and" within the award title. The dissertation or major project may be undertaken in

either subject area or a combination of both subjects and will not normally count towards the equal weighting of the subject areas.

3.2.3 Combined honours awards comprise two subjects studied in unequal proportions and will normally use "with" within the award title. For the subject area specified after the "with" designation, no more than 40 credits per undergraduate level or 30 credits at postgraduate level should normally be studied.

3.2.4 Credit is awarded on the principle that 10 credits relates to a notional 100 hours of learning time. A module shall also be assigned an ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credit value based on the equivalence of 1 ECTS credit to 2 University of Salford credits, with the exception of modules which are required to accommodate additional learning time to meet professional body requirements.

3.2.5 Modules should normally follow a 20-credit pattern for undergraduate awards and a 30-credit pattern for postgraduate taught awards. Dissertation or major project modules should normally comprise 40 credits or more. Modules must not normally be smaller than 20 credits in undergraduate programmes or 15 credits in postgraduate taught programmes.

3.2.6 Modules should only be designated as non-compensatable where a marginal fail would result in programme learning outcomes not being achieved, where those outcomes are fundamental to learning within the discipline, where professional competence would be affected, where public safety could be compromised, or where required by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB).

3.2.7 Programmes may include pass/fail modules. The use of pass/fail modules must comply with University regulations and policies. The maximum credit value of pass/fail modules shall normally be:

- Honours Degree: 60 credits at Level 4; 20 credits at Level 5; 20 credits at Level 6;
- Integrated Master's Degree: 60 credits at Level 4; 20 credits at Level 5; no pass/fail credit at Levels 6 or 7;
- Postgraduate taught programmes: no maximum specified.
- Placement modules are exempt from these limits.

3.2.8 Whilst programmes may comprise both core and optional modules, there should be a realistic and sustainable range of optional modules available in order to provide students with a clear understanding of the potential subject areas that may be studied on the programme.

3.2.9 Cross-level modules may be approved where there is a clear academic rationale and assessments appropriately differentiate achievement between academic levels.

3.2.10 The University may enter into arrangements with other institutions or organisations for delivery of programmes leading to University awards or credit. Such arrangements must comply with the Academic Regulations and Collaborative Provision Policy and Procedures.

3.2.11 For validated provision leading to awards of partner institutions, the principles of this Framework should normally inform programme design, development and review, except where alternative arrangements have been approved through validation processes.

3.2.12 All Programmes shall be delivered and assessed in English, including British Sign Language, except where programme learning outcomes relate specifically to competence in another language.

3.2.13 Programme and module learning outcomes must be written in clear, accessible and inclusive language that can be readily understood by students, applicants, employers and

other stakeholders. Learning outcomes should avoid unnecessary jargon and support equitable access to learning and assessment.

3.2.14 Learning outcomes should be designed to support constructive alignment between teaching, learning activities and assessment.

3.2.15 The number of learning outcomes should be proportionate to the volume of learning and assessment within the module or programme. As a general principle, there should normally be no more than two learning outcomes per 10 credits (so no more than four for 20 credit undergraduate modules and no more than six for 30 credit postgraduate modules), unless specified by PSRBs or occupational standards (e.g. apprenticeship programmes).

3.2.16 Learning outcomes must be capable of being assessed and should clearly articulate the knowledge, skills and behaviours students are expected to achieve.

3.2.17 Part-time programmes should not normally exceed twice the duration of the equivalent full-time programme.

4.0 Assessment Principles

4.1 Modules should normally contain no more than two assessment components. Any 15-credit postgraduate module should normally have only one assessment component.

4.2 Assessment components within a module must total 100%.

4.3 Each assessment component should receive a single mark. Where separate marks are required, these should constitute separate assessment components. No mark calculations should take place outside of the virtual learning environment or student information system.

4.4 Programme teams must comply with the Assessment and Feedback Policy in relation to:

- assessment design;
- assessment scheduling;
- assessment components; and
- formal examinations.

4.5 At validation and revalidation, programme teams must demonstrate that assessment activity has been designed to:

- support student learning and progression;
- avoid bunching of assessment activity;
- manage overall assessment burden; and
- provide a balanced assessment schedule across programme levels.

5.0 Award Titles

5.1 The University will not approve more than one programme with the same award title. This includes awards that may be validated for collaborative provision. Awards validated for delivery by franchise partners should also be delivered by the University.

5.2 Programmes with different award titles must demonstrate clear academic distinction and should not share identical curriculum structures. Undergraduate programmes with different titles should not normally share more than 50% common content across Levels 5 and 6. Postgraduate taught programmes should be distinguished through their dissertation or major project and at least two-thirds of their taught curriculum.

5.3 Where programmes include pathways, each pathway must represent a coherent and academically distinct route of study.

5.4 Pathways must be clearly differentiated through curriculum design, learning outcomes and graduate outcomes.

5.5 The title of an undergraduate award must not indicate whether a Foundation Year or International Foundation Year formed part of the programme.

5.6 Awards may be approved as both entry and exit awards. Exit awards need not have the same title as the intended final award and this may be the case where specialist knowledge is studied at level 6 or in the later stages of an award

5.7 The designation of an award must be academically justified and consistent with:

- curriculum content;
- learning outcomes;
- Subject Benchmark Statements;
- sector norms;
- PSRB requirements; and
- intended graduate outcomes.

5.8 Except where required by a PSRB, award titles must not include:

- mode of study;
- location of study;
- partner organisation names; or
- other descriptors and abbreviations.

6.0 Principles Supporting Student Success

6.1 All programmes should include the principles of the Salford Graduate of the Future and demonstrate how the programme meets these when going through validation or revalidation.

6.2 All programmes must include elements of work-based learning, work-integrated learning, authentic learning activities or engagement with professional practice.

6.3 Programme teams shall demonstrate how these activities contribute to graduate outcomes and employability.

6.4 Programmes may include placements, work experience or other extended work-based learning opportunities.

6.5 Assessment of placement activity must be consistent with the Academic Regulations and relevant University policies.

7.0 Validation and Revalidation

7.1 Programmes are normally approved on a six-year cycle, with revalidation activity taking place during the fifth year of delivery. Changes outside the revalidation cycle must be approved through the University's programme and module amendment procedures.

7.2 The approval route for programme changes shall be determined by the scale and nature of the proposed amendment in accordance with University procedures.

8.0 Policy Enforcement

8.1 Compliance with this Framework will be monitored through programme validation, amendment, continuous monitoring, revalidation and other quality assurance processes.

8.2 Academic Registry and the Quality Management Office are responsible for maintaining the Framework and supporting its implementation. Deans, Associate Deans, Programme Leaders and Validation Panels are responsible for ensuring compliance within programme approval, amendment and review processes.

9.0 Related Documentation (please note, not an exhaustive list)

- Academic Regulations for Taught Programmes
- Assessment and Feedback Policy
- Collaborative Provision Policy and Procedures
- Salford Graduate of the Future Framework
- Validation and Revalidation Procedures
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statements
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- UK Quality Code
- Office for Students Regulatory Framework

Document Control Information

Revision History incl. Authorisation: (most recent first)

Author	Summary of changes	Version	Authorised & Date
Emma French/ QMO Managers	*Creation following removal from Academic Regulations, updates following discussion at QSC and translation into policy template. Still further elements to confirm for 27-28 but this version is for 26-27*	1.0	QSC – 14/10/26

Policy Management and Responsibilities:

Owner:	This Policy is issued by Academic Registry, which has responsibility for the maintenance and communication of the Academic Curriculum Framework and has delegated day-to-day management of the Framework to the Quality Management Office.
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this policy.

Author to complete formal assessment with the following advisory teams:

Equality Analysis (E&D, HR)	1.
Legal implications (Legal)	2.
Information Governance (Legal)	3.
Student facing procedures (QMO)	4.
UKVI Compliance (Student Admin)	5.

Consultation:

Staff Trades Unions via HR Students via SSU Relevant external bodies (specify)	1.

Review:

Review due:	Annual
Document location:	University colleague hub site

The owner and author are responsible for publicising this policy document.