

## General Qualification Regulations 2014/15 (Registered Qualifications)

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The General Qualification Regulations should not be read in isolation. It is important that you read them in conjunction with the following documents.

- The Module Regulations
- The specific regulations governing your qualification
- The Student Regulations including the Code of Practice for Student Assessment and the Code of Practice for Student Discipline
- The Deferrals and Withdrawals Policy: if you want to defer or withdraw from your studies or to change your choice of qualification.

These regulations are available by going online to the Open University 'Essential Documents' website at [www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/essential-documents](http://www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/essential-documents).

### **GQR 1      Application of regulations**

- GQR 1.1.1      These regulations apply if you are registered for an academic qualification of The Open University designated either as an undergraduate qualification or as an integrated masters degree. The specific qualification regulations define the requirements that you must meet, as well as following the Student Regulations and Module Regulations, to register for and become eligible for a qualification of the University.
- GQR 1.1.2      If you are only registered for a module, you should refer to the Module Regulations. If you are studying for an academic qualification of the Open University designated as a postgraduate qualification, other than an integrated masters degree, you should refer to the General Qualification Regulations (Declared Qualifications).
- GQR 1.1.3      Credit and certification for individual modules is governed by the Student Regulations, Module Regulations and module rules.
- GQR 1.1.4      These General Qualification Regulations do not apply to those programmes of study in other academic institutions, professional bodies, companies and other organisations leading to awards of the Open University by validation.

### **GQR 2      Registration, Enrolment and Award**

#### **GQR 2.1      Registration**

- GQR 2.1.1      To be awarded an Open University qualification, you must be a registered student of the University, as set out in the Student Regulations.

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The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England & Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302). The Open University is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

GQR 2.1.2 You may only be registered for one qualification at any one time. If you want to change your qualification, you will need to withdraw and register for a new qualification as set out in Section 3 of the Deferrals and Withdrawals Policy which is available by going online to the Open University 'Essential Documents' website at [www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/essential-documents](http://www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/essential-documents).

GQR 2.1.3 When you register for a qualification you must be able to comply with any specified entry requirements, details of which will be in the specific qualification regulations.

## **GQR 2.2 Enrolment**

GQR 2.2.1 In order to register for a qualification and remain registered you must enrol on the appropriate module(s) within it. The credit requirement for each qualification is set out in the specific qualification regulations.

GQR 2.2.2 The published qualification information and enrolment process will show you the available compulsory and optional module(s) which are included in the credit requirements for each Stage of your qualification and the order in which they should be studied.

GQR 2.2.3 The University will offer appropriate module(s) for each qualification until the qualification is withdrawn (see GQR 4.1.2)

GQR 2.2.4 Modules offered by the University are subject to change. You may only enrol on modules that are included in your qualification and that are in presentation at the appropriate Stage of your qualification.

GQR 2.2.5 If any modules in your qualification have pre-requisite modules or co-requisite modules, you must comply with these module rules unless you have a formal exemption by approval of the Programme Director.

## **GQR 2.3 Award of qualification**

GQR 2.3.1 You will be awarded a qualification on which you are registered once you have successfully completed its requirements.

GQR 2.3.2 The University may also exceptionally award a qualification on the recommendation of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) following either:

- i) an award of Aegrotat credit
- ii) an award of higher level credit which has been counted down with the approval of the Programme Director
- iii) award of credit from modules not normally included in the qualification which have been assessed by the Programme Director as demonstrating appropriate learning outcomes.

### **GQR 2.3.3 Name of qualification**

The relevant specific qualification regulations will confirm the name of the qualification and the letters that holders of the qualification are permitted to use after their names. If your qualification can have more than one name, the available names will be included in the specific qualification regulations.

#### **GQR 2.3.4 Continuation of studies after award of a qualification**

If you have been awarded your registered qualification and wish to continue to another qualification to which the credit can count, you must register for that other qualification. You must comply with the unique study requirements in paragraph GQR 4.4.

### **GQR 3 Studying for a qualification**

#### **GQR 3.1 Qualification stages**

**GQR 3.1.1** If your qualification has a credit value of 120 credits or more the modules which comprise that qualification will be assigned to a Stage of the qualification.

**GQR 3.1.2** A qualification may have an optional Stage 0 and up to 4 qualification Stages each to be studied in the prescribed sequence.

**GQR 3.1.3** An optional Stage 0 will comprise up to 30 credits from Access or Openings modules. Credit awarded in Stage 0 does not count towards the credit requirements of qualifications.

**GQR 3.1.4** Each Stage at Stage 1 and above will comprise 120 credits to be awarded for modules included in that Stage and will be completed when you have met all the credit requirements for that Stage and any other requirements in the specific qualification regulations.

#### **GQR 3.2 Commencement of studies**

You must commence your studies towards your registered qualification by enrolling on one or more of the modules included in Stage 1 of that qualification unless:

- i) you begin your studies with the optional Stage 0; or
- ii) you are counting OU credit awarded prior to registration for the qualification that meets the requirements for Stage 1; or
- iii) you are counting an award of credit transfer that meets the requirements for Stage 1; or
- iv) you are counting a combination of OU credit awarded prior to registration for the qualification and an award of credit transfer that meets the requirements for Stage 1; or
- v) the specific qualification regulations permit studies to start at Stage 2 or Stage 3; or
- vi) your registered qualification has a credit value of fewer than 120 credits and does not have Stages.

If you begin your studies with the optional Stage 0, your subsequent study for your registered qualification must be one or more of the specified modules for Stage 1 of that qualification unless you have met one of the conditions ii) to vi) above.

### **GQR 3.3 Order of study**

GQR 3.3.1 If the published qualification information or enrolment process specifies an order of study for individual modules within Stages, you will only be permitted to enrol for module(s) in accordance with those rules. In all other cases you are strongly advised to study modules in the order recommended in the guidance for each Stage of the qualification.

GQR 3.3.2 Stages of qualifications must be studied in order and you must meet the rules for progression between Stages in paragraph GQR 3.4. If your qualification specifically permits an order of study which does not require you to study Stages in sequence, this will be in the specific qualification regulations.

### **GQR 3.4 Progression**

If your registered qualification comprises two or more Stages you will need to meet the University requirements for progression from one Stage to the next unless the specific qualification regulations state otherwise. If you have been awarded all of the credit within a Stage of your qualification, you have met the University progression requirement unless your specific qualification regulations include any additional progression rules.

#### **GQR 3.4.1 Progression from Stage 1**

You may not be permitted to remain enrolled after the start date on a module at Stage 2 (if any) unless you have met the requirements for progression from Stage 1 or you meet the criteria in GQR 3.4.4 below.

#### **GQR 3.4.2 Progression from Stage 2**

You may not be permitted to remain enrolled after the start date on a module at Stage 3 (if any) unless you have met the requirements for progression from Stage 2 unless you meet the criteria in GQR 3.4.4 below.

#### **GQR 3.4.3 Progression from Stage 3**

You may not be permitted to remain enrolled after the start date on a module at Stage 4 (if any) unless you have met the requirements for progression from Stage 3 unless you meet the criteria in GQR 3.4.4 below.

#### **GQR 3.4.4 Criteria for progression**

(a) If you have not met the requirements for progression, you will be permitted to study at the next Stage of a qualification if you have been awarded at least 60 credits for the previous Stage of the qualification and either:

- i) you are enrolled on the final module in a Stage and that module will not be completed, or the module result will not be available, prior to the start of the next Stage in your registered qualification; or
- ii) you have completed study of the remaining modules for that Stage subject only to a discretionary postponement or outstanding resit or resubmission of the examinable component; or
- iii) you intend to study a next Stage module at the same time as the final module(s) in the previous Stage

- (b) If you are permitted to enrol for a module in the next Stage under this regulation you may change your enrolment to a module in the previous Stage (subject to the availability of places) or defer the next Stage module at any time up to the module start date as set out in Section 3 of the Deferrals and Withdrawals Policy which is available by going online to the Open University 'Essential Documents' website at [www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/essential-documents](http://www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/essential-documents) and following the link to Registration as a student.
- (c) If you are permitted to continue to remain enrolled after the start date on a next Stage module pending a result for a previous Stage module and do not subsequently achieve the award of credit for the previous Stage module you will be permitted to complete the next Stage module on which you are enrolled. However, you will not be permitted to enrol for any further modules at the higher Stage until you have completed, or are repeating study of the outstanding credit at the lower Stage, even if you are awarded credit for the next Stage module.
- (d) You will not be permitted to enrol for a module at Stage 3 of your registered qualification until you have completed the credit requirement for Stage 1 of that qualification unless the specific qualification regulations state otherwise.
- (e) You will not be permitted to enrol for a module at Stage 4 of your registered qualification until you have completed the credit requirement for Stage 1 and 2 of that qualification unless the specific qualification regulations state otherwise.

**GQR 3.4.5 Exceptions from progression requirements**

The University may also exceptionally permit progression with the approval of the Programme Director.

**GQR 4 Qualifications**

**GQR 4.1 Availability**

**GQR 4.1.1 Time limits**

- (a) The University has time limits on all its registered qualifications to ensure coherence of academic study, external credibility and that satisfactory academic progress is being made. You must therefore complete your qualification within the time limits set.
- (b) Unless the specific qualification regulations state otherwise, the time limit within which you must complete your qualification starts at the earliest of:
  - i) the start date of the first module, including optional Stage 0 modules you study when you begin your studies for that qualification. This includes any modules that you fail, defer or withdraw from; or
  - ii) if you are counting OU credit that was awarded prior to registration for the qualification, the start date of the earliest module for which you are counting credit.

iii) if you are counting an award of credit transfer, the start date allocated to you on the basis of the date of your credit transfer award. This will be 30th November if your credit transfer is awarded between January 1st and August 31st, or 31st August if your credit transfer is awarded between September 1st and December 31st.

(c) If you do not achieve the credit required for your qualification within the set time limit you will not be eligible for the qualification. You may be eligible for any other qualification that you met the requirements for within the time limit applicable to that other qualification

(d) Subject to any specific requirements of your qualification, the University has approved the following maximum time limits for all undergraduate qualifications:

- 60-credit certificates: 4 years
- 120-credit certificates of HE: 7 years
- 120-credit diploma: 7 years
- 240-credit foundation degree: 12 years
- 240-credit diplomas of HE: 12 years
- 300-credit bachelor degrees without honours: 16 years
- 360-credit honours degrees: 16 years
- 480-credit honours degree: 16 years
- 480-credit integrated masters degree: 16 years

Where specific time limit requirements are shorter than the maximum time limits they will be stated in specific qualification regulations.

(e) If you are counting an award of credit transfer, you should also refer to the additional information about time limits based upon the amount of credit still to complete in paragraph GQR 5.13.

#### **GQR 4.1.2 Withdrawals of qualifications**

If you are registered for a qualification and the University has approved the withdrawal of that qualification you will be given a reasonable opportunity to complete your study for it within the time approved for withdrawal and subject to the continued availability of the modules required to complete it. If the period for withdrawal is shorter than that of the qualification time limit, then the withdrawal date will override the qualification time limit. You may also withdraw and register for a new qualification as set out in Section 3 of the Deferrals and Withdrawals Policy which is available by going online to the Open University 'Essential Documents' website at [www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/essential-documents](http://www.open.ac.uk/students/charter/essential-documents) and following the link to Registration as a student.

#### **GQR 4.2 Counting credit towards a qualification**

GQR 4.2.1 The credit requirement for each qualification is set out in specific qualification regulations.

GQR 4.2.2 Credit from an optional Stage 0 does not count towards the credit requirements of qualifications but will appear on the transcript.

- GQR 4.2.3 You may count credit towards your qualification for any module for which you are enrolled.
- GQR 4.2.4 If you have studied a module prior to registering on a qualification, credit from that module may count if it is included within the qualification requirement and is within the time limit for the qualification.
- GQR 4.2.5 You may choose not to count credit towards a qualification from a module that is optional.
- GQR 4.2.6 Within one qualification, you cannot count credit from a module that is designated as an excluded combination with another module that you are also counting.

### **GQR 4.3 Qualification dates**

- GQR 4.3.1 There are four qualification dates each year: 31st March, 31st July, 30th September and 31st December.
- GQR 4.3.2 Your qualification date will be the qualification date in GQR 4.3.1 following the date when you become eligible for your registered qualification.
- GQR 4.3.3 For some qualifications you will be notified that you are eligible and will be asked to confirm that you are accepting the award of the qualification.

#### **GQR 4.3.4 Eligibility by completion of OU modules**

Your qualification date will be the qualification date following the date that you meet the credit requirement that makes you eligible for the qualification by successfully completing Open University modules. This applies if you complete credit after registration on the qualification or if the credit was completed before registration on the qualification. If you have successfully completed Open University modules that make you eligible for a qualification that was not available at the time that you completed that credit and you subsequently register for that qualification, the qualification date will be the date that the qualification was formally approved on behalf of Senate.

#### **GQR 4.3.5 Eligibility by the award of transferred credit**

If you become eligible for a qualification as a direct result of an award of transferred credit for study undertaken elsewhere towards your registered qualification, the qualification date will be the date transferred credit was awarded. If you have not registered for a qualification but you meet the credit requirement that makes you eligible for a qualification, including an award of transferred credit, and you subsequently register for that qualification, the qualification date will either be (i) the qualification date following the date that you met the credit requirement that made you eligible for the qualification by successful completion of Open University modules or (ii) the date the transferred credit was awarded, whichever was the latest.

#### **GQR 4.4 Unique study**

All qualifications of the University have a requirement for you to undertake a specified amount of unique study – i.e. study that has not been counted towards a previous qualification. You must comply with the unique study rules which are contained in the specific regulations for your registered qualification. Credit which has only been counted in undergraduate-level qualifications of less than 120 credits will be treated as uncounted credit for this purpose towards any bachelor's degree.

#### **GQR 5 Credit transfer**

##### **GQR 5.1 Approved schemes**

From time to time, the Senate may approve credit transfer schemes for particular Open University qualifications.

##### **GQR 5.2 Previous study**

Any award of transferred credit must be made in recognition of study completed at another institution, which is formally assessed and certificated, at the higher education level and has been approved as eligible for credit transfer by the Senate. The study must have been successfully completed and the level and content of the study must be appropriate for the Open University qualification concerned. Exceptionally, approval may be given for awards of credit transfer to be made towards particular qualifications in recognition of study that is not at the higher education level. All applications will be subject to scrutiny to ensure their relevance to the qualification. Any award made is a matter of academic judgement.

##### **GQR 5.3 Applying for transferred credit**

You should submit an application for credit transfer before you register for a qualification. Any award of credit transfer made will be valid for the named qualification within that academic year. If you do not commence your Open University studies within that academic year, it may be necessary for your award of credit transfer to be reassessed if there have been any changes to the structure or curriculum of your qualification. You will be advised if your award of credit transfer remains valid, is due to expire or needs to be reassessed.

##### **GQR 5.4 Counting transferred credit towards a qualification**

Any award of credit transfer will be made towards a particular Open University qualification and may only be counted toward that qualification. If you change your registered qualification, you will need to apply for your credit transfer to be reassessed.

##### **GQR 5.5 Fees**

You must pay the credit transfer fee (if this applies) when you apply for transferred credit. When you pay the fee, you will be entitled to have your transferred credit application considered. If you do not pay the fee, we will not consider your application.



## **GQR 5.6      Forms of transferred credit**

Any award of transferred credit must take the form of:

- (a)      Module exemption, exempting you from studying a particular OU module in the context of that qualification. To be eligible for this type of exemption the content and learning outcome of the previous study and the OU module must be a close match. This credit will be awarded following academic scrutiny of the application.
- (b)      General credit exemption, exempting you from studying a number of credits from a module or list of modules in a qualification. To be eligible for this type of exemption the content and learning outcomes of the previous study must broadly match with those of the module/s required for that OU qualification. This credit will be awarded following academic scrutiny of the application.
- (c)      Collaborative scheme credit, where collaborative modules are specified modules from a particular institution with which the Open University has a formal agreement. The credit can be used as an alternative to OU modules where they are specified as part of that OU qualification.

Not all of these forms are approved for every Open University qualification.

## **GQR 5.7      General credit exemption and collaborative scheme credit**

If we award general credit exemption or collaborative scheme credit, the Senate has the authority to limit your choice of Open University modules that can be counted towards a qualification if there is a significant overlap in subject matter between the content of the studies for which you were awarded the general credit exemption or the collaborative scheme credit and the content of any Open University modules.

## **GQR 5.8      Passing on Senate authority**

The Senate may delegate the power to make decisions about individual awards of transferred credit and approve individual credit transfer schemes.

## **GQR 5.9      More than one period of previous study**

You may provide evidence of two or more periods of study to support an application for transferred credit. In line with the regulations for particular qualifications, the Senate can decide whether or not to take account of more than one period of study when considering an award of transferred credit. There must be no significant overlap in content between the periods of study. The total award of transferred credit (including any collaborative scheme credit) must not be more than the maximum permitted for the particular Open University qualification concerned.

## **GQR 5.10      Abandoning transferred credit**

If you receive an award of transferred credit towards a particular Open University qualification, you may abandon all or part of it before the qualification is awarded and in line with any conditions that the Senate might set.

## **GQR 5.11 Other conditions**

### **GQR 5.11.1 Regulations in force**

If you apply for transferred credit, you will have to follow the general and qualification-specific credit transfer regulations that are in force at the time of the application.

### **GQR 5.11.2 Changes in policy**

If you ask us to reassess a previous award of transferred credit because of a change in policy affecting the award that you would receive for a particular period of study, you will have to follow the credit transfer regulations in force at the time that you ask for the reassessment.

### **GQR 5.11.3 Studies not included**

If you apply for a reassessment of a previous award of transferred credit because studies have not been included in the original application, and if you are eligible for an increased award as a result of reassessment, you will have to follow the credit transfer regulations in force at the time that you ask for the application to be reassessed.

## **GQR 5.12 Time limit on transferred credit**

Students will only be awarded transferred credit if all the prior study has been completed within a timescale appropriate to the Open University qualification; this will be a maximum of 16 years prior to the start of your study on your registered qualification but some qualifications will have different time limits. Time limits on transferred credit which are shorter than the maximum time limits will be stated in specific qualification regulations.

## **GQR 5.13 Time limit on a qualification with credit transfer**

Subject to any specific requirements of your qualification, the University has approved the following maximum time limits for the completion of undergraduate qualifications, dependent on the amount of credit transferred and the credits still to complete:

- 30–60 credits still to complete: 4 years
- 90–120 credits still to complete: 7 years
- 150–180 credits still to complete: 9 years
- 210–240 credits still to complete: 12 years
- 270–300 credits still to complete: 14 years
- 330 or more credits still to complete: 16 years

Where specific time limit requirements are shorter than the maximum time limits, they will be stated in specific qualification regulations.

## Summary of changes made in these Regulations during 2014/2015

### August 2014

- (a) To remove the word 'Undergraduate' from the title;
- (b) To include an integrated masters degree within the scope of the regulations (GQR 1.1.1) and to exclude it from the scope of the General Qualification Regulations (Declared Qualifications) (GQR 1.1.2);
- (c) To apply the time limit for a qualification to an integrated masters degree (GQR 4.1.1(a)) and that time limit is 16 years (GQR 4.1.1(b));
- (d) To apply the time limit for completing a qualification with credit transfer to circumstances where more than 330 credits of Open University study may be required to complete (GQR 5.13).

### August 2015

- (a) To add "*unless you have a formal exemption by approval of the Programme Director*" to GQR 2.2.5.
- (b) To revise GQR Sections 3.4.1 to 3.4.4 to refer to progression criteria rather than exceptions, and to add GQR 3.4.5.
- (c) To add "*Unless the specific qualification regulations state otherwise*" to GQR4.1.1(b).