

Masters Awards by Learning Agreement (MALA)

Framework Document

2010/11

(This document should be read in conjunction with the AQS Handbook)

Masters Awards by Learning Agreement Framework Document

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Glossary of Terms

Accreditation and Approvals Board (AAB)	University forum to approve and monitor accreditation proposals and to monitor University accreditation frameworks.
Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)	A process, through which previously assessed and certificated learning is considered and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.
Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)	A process, through which learning achieved outside education or training systems is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.
Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)	A process for accessing and, as appropriate, recognising prior experiential learning or prior certificated learning for academic purposes. This learning may be given a credit value in a credit based structure and allows it to be counted towards the completion of a programme of study and the award(s) or qualifications associated with it. (For blanket recognition of credit see Articulation.)
Articulation Agreement	A formal agreement recognising the credit rating of a named qualification of another institution or organisation creating the opportunity to transfer credit and enable student entry from the named institution or organisation with advanced standing and specific credit to a University award.
Assessment Criteria	Indicate what standard a student should meet to demonstrate that the learning outcomes of a module have been achieved.
Award Title	This is a validated award title covering an area of study. The content of the award is defined by the Learning Agreement and the modules specified within it.
Cohort Programme	Where a group of students from an organisation follow a standard learning agreement related to that organisation.
Course	The name of the terminal qualification (the award e.g. MSc) plus the title of the field (e.g. Management Studies) to which a student is admitted
Credit	A quantified means of expressing equivalence of learning. Credit is awarded to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level.
Credit Level	An indicator of relative demand; complexity; depth of study and learner autonomy.
Credit Rating	The process of assigning to a module (or equivalent) a number of credits at a specified level.
Credit Value	The credit status of a module whereby one credit equates to 10 notional hours of successful learning activity, which includes all time spent by the learner in pursuit of achieving the designated learning outcomes.
Field	The term given to the validated set of modules whose title forms part of the course to which the student is admitted
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	Descriptions of the outcomes of the main qualifications titles within five levels, three at undergraduate level and two at postgraduate. The framework is linked to qualification descriptors and within each level there are bands of qualifications

	sharing similar generic outcomes.
Framework Specification	A concise description of the generic intended learning from a higher education programme, and the means by which these outcomes are achieved and demonstrated.
General Credit	Credit that recognises educational level and extent of prior or alternative learning.
Learning Agreement	A document which usually contains details relating to the learning and personal development which a learner aims to achieve within a given period of time. It describes the way in which the learning and development will be demonstrated and assessed. It provides a mechanisms for the academic validation of individually customised programmes of study which lead to an academic award. Learning agreements may sometimes be referred to as Learning Contracts.
Learning Outcomes	A description of what a student should know, understand or be able to do at the end of a period of learning.
Level Descriptors	Generic statements describing the characteristics and context of learning expected at each level against which specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria can be reviewed in order to develop modules and assign credit at the appropriate level.
Notional Learning Time	The number of hours which it is expected a learner will spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes at a level
Programme	The set of modules studies by a student
Subject Benchmark Statements	Statements which describe the nature and characteristics of programmes in a specific subject. They also represent general expectations about the standards of the award of qualifications at a given level and articulate the attributes and capabilities that those possessing such qualifications should be able to demonstrate.
Work Based Learning	Learning that is usually achieved and demonstrated through engagement with a workplace environment, the assessment of reflective practice and the designation of appropriate learning outcomes. ¹
WBL Module	A self contained, formally structured learning experience with defined level and credit value and a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. The standard WBL module is 15 credits, though a wide variety of module credit values are used. Within the Framework the term Goal has previously been used to describe a module

¹ QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in HE: Section 9: Work-based and Placement Learning – September 2007

Masters Awards by Learning Agreement Framework (The MALA Framework)

1. Aims of the Framework

1.1 The Framework has been designed to:

- Recognise the value of learning that takes place in the workplace
- Support the personal and professional development of learners who are already in the workplace building on their existing knowledge and expertise;
- Provide learners with the opportunity to negotiate a flexible programme of study that facilitates a focus on learning and development activities that are related to the work place;
- Allow for employer requirements to be integrated into individual and cohort programmes of study

1.2 The Masters by Learning Agreement is specifically designed for:

Individuals who:

- Wish to access modules to create a cross-disciplinary award
- Wish to develop their own learning either
 - Through planned self-supported study or
 - Through a specific investigation with tutor guidance/input
- Have needs/wishes which are not met in standard University programmes e.g. content, process (mode, assessment strategy, learning methods), size of award.

Organisations who:

- Have individuals in different sections of the organisation who could bring value-added to the organisation by pursuing individualised programmes which have work-based projects
- Wish to develop a customised programme (cohort programme) for their staff, based on negotiated learning principles

1.3 The Framework Specification is at Annex A. This sets out the general features of a Masters award within the Framework.

1.4 The general features and characteristics of each named award within the Framework are described within a Programme Specification (see Annex B). These provide a short description of the general aims and learning outcomes of the named award and provide the context within which both the faculty and university approvals processes can test the appropriateness of new learning agreements that will use that award title. Programme Specifications will be appended to the generic Framework specification.

2. Credit and the Learning Agreement

2.1 The University credit scheme aligns with the fundamental premise that assessed learning of an appropriate standard, wherever it occurs, can gain academic credit towards an award.

2.2 Kingston University's Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) is based on the award of credit to learners. The building blocks of the CATS scheme are credits which are awarded for the achievement of learning outcomes at a specified level. The volume of credit allotted to

each learning objective (i.e. 15 or 20 credits) reflects the amount of student learning effort which will be required to achieve the learning outcomes.

- 2.3 One credit represents ten notional hours of successful learning time. This includes all the learning time a student will take to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes including work done in the workplace and time for the preparation of assessments. As a general guide a 15 credit module assumes 150 hours of student learning.
- 2.4 It is important to distinguish between the effort required to achieve a work objective and the effort required to achieve a learning objective – the former will be greater than the latter. For example where an artefact or large report is produced for the workplace the effort can be considerable but where this is used as the basis for a learning objective, the credit value attaches to the identification of the learning specified in the learning agreement and the preparation of materials for assessment only.
- 2.5 Normally, within the Framework, blocks of learning outcomes will be a minimum of 7.5 credits and where practicable, will be in 15 credit multiples, although other credit values may occur. Each block and associated assessment will be considered as a 'module' and the University Postgraduate Credit Framework applied accordingly.

3. Available Qualifications

The following qualifications are available within the MALA Framework:

- 3.1 *Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)*
To qualify for this award a minimum of 60 credits at levels 6 and 7 must be achieved of which at least 45 credits must be at level 7.
- 3.2 *Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip)*
To qualify for this award a minimum of 120 credits at levels 6 and 7 must be achieved of which at least 90 credits must be at level 7.
- 3.3 *Master's Degree*
To qualify for this award a minimum of 180 credits at levels 6 and 7 must be achieved of which at least 150 credits must be at level 7.

4. Awards

- 4.1 A list of currently approved award titles is contained in Annex A.
- 4.2 Award titles are specific to the programme of study. It is not practice for the award title to reflect the work based nature of the programme (unlike other institutions where work based learning is a field of study).

5. The Structure of Programmes

- 5.1 Programmes within the Framework can be made up of credit from a number of sources including:
 - Negotiated Work Based Learning (WBL) modules
 - Appropriately evidenced and assessed work-based learning

- Validated modules selected from existing courses within the University (carrying the credit value established at validation)
- Accredited short courses
- Accredited programmes of study provided by an employer
- Accredited modules or courses offered by other institutions
- APCL or APEL

5.2 Programmes within the Framework should also demonstrate how the University's Skills Framework has been integrated into the design of negotiated programmes.

6. Marketing

6.1 Programmes offered within the Masters by Learning Agreement Framework will be promoted via a number of routes including:

- KU Prospectus
- KU website (faculty and Services to Business pages)
- Faculty promotional materials

7. Enquiries

Individuals

7.1 Where a prospective student has identified the main subject focus for their programme of study, they will contact the relevant faculty where further advice can be given.

7.2 Prospective students will be issued with the Masters by Learning Agreement Student Handbook which provides generic information about the Framework. Faculty specific information can be added i.e. details of fees and the schedule of enrolment points.

Employers

7.3 Enquiries from employers about the development of a Cohort Programme will be routed through the relevant faculty. The faculty will appoint a Facilitator to work with the employer to explore their requirements, and to negotiate and define the Cohort Learning Agreement.

8. Arrangements for Admission

8.1 It is the responsibility of each faculty to determine the number of intakes for the Masters Awards by Learning Agreement. These will be published annually.

9. Applications

9.1 If the prospective learner wishes to proceed, they will complete an application form which includes a statement of intent giving an overview of what they wish to study/investigate and how the course fits in with their career plan. Applications will be considered within the relevant faculty.

9.2 The admission of students to awards within the Masters by Learning Agreement Framework is at the discretion of the authorised admissions tutor(s) for each named award.

9.3 Following consideration of the application form, and in principle approval to admit the candidate to an award, the faculty will assign:

A Facilitator who will:

- explain to the candidate the principles of the Masters by Learning Agreement
- work with the candidate and their organisation (where appropriate) to identify and define the basis of the Learning Agreement, including learning achievements to date, the learners personal and professional requirements and the employers needs
- assess the candidate's work experience and qualifications and identify any potential APCL/APEL claims
- work with the candidate to undertake a key skills audit to identify those skills that will be developed/enhanced via the programme of study
- negotiate with the candidate, the workplace mentor (where appropriate) and the Academic Supervisor to identify a series of learning outcomes and modules that make up a programme of work that will form the full Learning Agreement.
- submit the completed learning agreement to the relevant Faculty committee for approval (see section 12).

An Academic Supervisor who will:

- provide subject specific or technical input to the negotiated programme

10. Learning Agreement Structure

10.1 The template for the Learning Agreement is at Annex C. The form is designed to express the nature and content of the programme of learning, its link to the relevant Programme Specification, the relationship to any prior learning claims and the credit that will be awarded towards a qualification. It forms the basis of the agreement between the Learner and the University. The Agreement can be re-negotiated if necessary.

10.2 The Learning Agreement is structured as follows:

Section 1	The student's personal details including details of supervisory arrangements. This section also includes the student's signature indicating acceptance of the learning agreement and agreement to abide by the University regulations.
Section 2	A summary of the overall aims of the Programme, incorporating contextual information about the employer and the student's current experience and learning. It also contains the aims of the proposed programme and identifies what tasks the learner will undertake.
Section 3	Provides a details of each of the elements that will make up the programme including: any APEL/APCL that will contribute to the programme of study; pre-validated modules and the negotiated WBL modules together with the associated learning outcomes, with credit value and anticipated completion and assessment dates for each module.
Section 4	Level Descriptors for Level M and KU Key Skills
Section 5	A Learning Outcomes Record which is completed for each negotiated WBL module. This includes the learning outcomes, the work tasks that result in level 7 learning, the assessment criteria and the mode of assessment. This

form also includes details of any required resources and the name of the supervisor and the assessor for the module.

When considering modifications to the Learning Agreement Learning Outcomes Record, the Credit Value, learning outcomes and assessment elements are classed as definitive. The aims, activities and assessment criteria are defined as indicative.

11. Approval Bodies

University level - Accreditation and Approvals Board

11.1 The University Accreditation and Approvals Board (AAB) has responsibility for the consideration and approval of the following aspects of the Masters Awards by Learning Agreement Framework. The AAB is a sub-committee of the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC) and has delegated authority for:

- The approval of modifications to the Masters Awards by Learning Agreement Framework document
- The approval of modifications to the Field Specification for Masters Awards by Learning Agreement (Annex A)
- The approval of new Programme Specifications
- The approval of major modifications to Programme Specifications (*refers to changes to the Aims and Learning Outcomes of the programme*)
- The approval, monitoring and review of Articulation Agreements
- The credit rating of external short courses where general credit is being granted
- The consideration of annual reports from faculties on individual and cohort approvals, the use of APL and data on enrolments and awards
- The approval and monitoring of Progression Agreements that facilitate entry with advanced standing
- The receipt from, and reference to QEC of any issues of relevance.

11.2 Membership of the Board will be as follows:

Chair	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Employer Engagement)
External	With relevant expertise in WBL/APEL/CATs
Representative from each Faculty	With experience of course approval
Head of Learning & Teaching	
Development	Academic Development Centre
Head of Workforce Development	Academic Development Centre
Clerk	Assistant Registrar (Workforce Development)

Other members may be co-opted as relevant.

11.3 The Accreditation and Approvals Board will report annually to the Quality Enhancement Committee.

11.4 The Board will typically meet four times per year. A schedule of meetings will be published annually.

Faculty Based

11.5 Faculties have responsibility for the consideration and approval of the following:

- The approval of all individual Learning Agreements
- The approval of cohort Learning Agreements that sit under an existing Award Title and associated Programme Specification
- The approval of modifications (see section 12) to Learning Agreements (both cohort and individual)
- The approval of minor modifications to Programme Specifications (any aspect of the specification except modifications that affect the Aims and Learning Outcomes of the programme – see section 11.1 above for the approval of major modifications)
- The approval of modifications to Learning Agreements for existing students (pre September 2009).

11.6 It will be up to the Faculty to determine the most appropriate fora for this activity to be conducted (e.g. the Faculty Quality Committee).

12. Faculty Based Approvals

Individually Designed Programmes – using existing award titles

12.1 When considering each submission the Faculty committee will receive the following:

- Relevant Programme Specification
- Draft Learning Agreement*
- Any claim for APCL/APEL
- Signed report from the Subject Expert (See annex D)**
- Evidence of support from the relevant Head of School

* In some faculties it is practice for students to be admitted to an award on the basis of a generic Learning Agreement that is subsequently developed into an expanded Learning Agreement following completion of a Professional Development Audit (or similar process) which results in an expanded Learning Agreement, which is informed by a competency mapping and evaluative review.

** Previously the draft programme would also have been considered by an Independent Briefer – this role is now fulfilled by the members of the faculty committee responsible for approval.

12.2 The Faculty will consider the evidence submitted, discuss any unresolved issues and ratify (or otherwise) approval of the programme.

12.3 Following approval of the individual Learning Agreement students may be notified of the outcome and enrolled with the University.

12.4 If a Learning Agreement requires amendment before approval can be given, the Chair will determine the timescale for resubmission and the subsequent method for approval (e.g. Chair's action).

Cohort Programmes – using existing award titles

- 12.5 Where a programme of study (or part of a programme) is identical for a group of students and will utilise an existing award title, the Cohort Learning Agreement should be submitted to the appropriate Faculty committee for approval.
- 12.6 When considering the submission the Faculty will receive the following:
- Relevant Programme Specification
 - Draft Cohort Learning Agreement
 - Signed report from the Subject Expert (see annex D)**
 - Evidence of support from the relevant Head of School
- ** Previously the draft programme would also have been considered by an Independent Briefer – this role is now fulfilled by the members of the faculty committee responsible for approval.
- 12.7 The Faculty will consider the evidence submitted, discuss any unresolved issues and ratify (or otherwise) approval of the Cohort Learning Agreement.
- 12.8 If a Cohort Learning Agreement requires amendment before approval can be granted, the Chair will determine the timescale for resubmission and the subsequent method for approval (e.g. Chair's action).
- 12.9 If a Cohort Learning Agreement includes the Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning the approval mechanism follows the Articulation process described in Section H of the AQS Handbook (see also section 15 below).

Modifications

- 12.10 Because of the flexible, negotiated nature of the awards offered within the Framework it is possible that either individual learner circumstances change i.e. change of job responsibilities, redundancy or periods of heavy workload or that the work environment changes. In such situations there may be a requirement to modify the Learning Agreement. The following procedures will be adopted:

Modifications to Learning Agreements – Indicative and Definitive Elements

- 12.11 Modifications to the indicative elements of a WBL module of any size which forms part of either an individually designed Learning Agreements or a Cohort Learning Agreements may be approved by a designated member of Faculty staff authorised to consider modifications of this kind on behalf of the Faculty Quality Committee.
- 12.12 The indicative elements of a WBL module are:
- the Aims
 - Activities and
 - Assessment Criteria.

All other elements are defined as definitive. (See section 5 of Annex C). Modifications will be noted to the relevant Board of Study

12.13 Faculties are also empowered, under delegated authority, to consider the approval of the definitive elements of WBL modules contained within individually designed Learning Agreements and Cohort Learning Agreements. Definitive elements of a WBL module are defined as:

- the credit value
- learning outcomes and
- the mode of assessment.

The Faculty committee responsible for approval of modifications will receive a completed G4 Form: Changes to Fields by Delegated Powers (section G of the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook) together with a revised Learning Agreement.

Modifications to Programme Specifications – Minor

12.14 Faculties have responsibility for the approval of minor modifications to existing programme specifications. Minor modifications relate to changes to:

- the Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Structure of the Award
- Field reference points and
- Entry criteria
- Period of registration

12.15 When considering requests for modification the relevant faculty committee will receive:

- A revised programme specification
- A short supporting statement explaining the rationale for the change

Extensions

12.16 It is possible for students to request an extension to the original timescales indicated in the Learning Agreement. Such a request must be supported by valid reasons for why the original timescale should no longer apply. Valid reasons are conditions that are outside the student's control and which could prejudice progress of the programme of work. These might include permanent or temporary changes in the student's work and responsibilities or redundancy.

12.17 Extensions must be applied for in writing and will be considered by the faculty under delegated authority. It will be up to the Faculty to identify the personnel with authority to consider and approve extension. The decision will be informed by the maximum period of registration, as stipulated in section 20 or recorded in the relevant programme specification. The outcomes of requests for extension will be recorded by the Faculty.

Recording Amendments

12.18 Current Learning Agreements will be marked with the date the most recent amendment was agreed, the name of the Facilitator who made and submitted the amendment for approval, the version number and the date of approval.

12.19 The most recent version of an amended Learning Agreement will be stored on the student's master file. All previous amendments to a particular Learning Agreement will be kept in date order together with any correspondence relating to the amendments.

12.20 Amended Programme Specifications should be marked with the version number, the date the most recent amendments were approved. The most recent version of an amended Programme Specification should be submitted by the Faculty to Academic Quality and Standards for record and publication.

13. University Level Approvals

13.1 The Accreditation and Approvals Board has authority to consider and approve the following:

New Programme Specifications

13.2 The Accreditation and Approvals Board (AAB) is authorised to approve new Programme Specifications submitted to it by Faculties.

13.3 Academic Quality and Standards will maintain a record of currently approved Programme Specifications.

13.4 When considering the proposal for a new Programme Specification the AAB will receive the following;

- New Programme Specification
- Draft Learning Agreement
- Signed report from the External Subject Expert (see Annex H)

13.5 Nominations for External Subject Experts are submitted to Academic Quality and Standards using Form C2: Panel Nomination form (section C of the AQS Handbook).

13.6 The AAB will consider the evidence submitted, discuss any unresolved issues and ratify (or otherwise) approval of the Programme Specification.

13.7 If a Programme Specification requires amendment before approval can be granted, the Chair of AAB will determine the timescale for resubmission and the subsequent method for approval,

Major Modifications to Programme Specifications

13.8 It is the responsibility of the AAB to consider major modifications to Programme Specification. In this context major modification refers to any changes to either:

- the Educational Aims or
- the Learning Outcomes of the programme.

13.9 Requests from faculties to the AAB to consider such modifications should be presented using form G3 in section G of the AQS Handbook.

Modifications to the Framework Specification

- 13.10 The Accreditation and Approvals Board will review the Framework Specification on an annual basis. The AAB will be responsible for any consequent modifications to the Specification.

Changes to Award Titles

- 13.11 Changes to existing award titles will be considered under the processes described in section G (Changes to Field Titles) in the AQS Handbook.
- 13.12 A proposal to terminate an award title must be made to Academic Directorate on Form A3: Field Closure Form (Section A of the AQS Handbook). In implementing the closure, faculties must follow the checklist supplied with Form A3.

14 Third Party Providers

- 14.1 There will be instances where a third party provider may be involved in aspects of the delivery of the Learning Agreement: through pre-cursor learning that forms part of an Articulation Agreement, the delivery of curriculum that contributes to a Learning Agreement or the assessment of student work.
- 14.2 When considering such arrangements the Faculty, in negotiation with Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) will determine the level of involvement of the third party provider and based on the level of risk advise on the application of the processes for partner approval described in Sections B and H of the AQS Handbook.
- 14.3 Consideration will be given to new partner approval processes including the necessity for due diligence, the production of contractual documentation, the approval of articulation arrangements which are formalised by an Articulation Agreement (see section 15), the processes for approval, either by the AAB or the requirement for full University validation depending on the scale of involvement and perceived risk of the proposed arrangement.

15 Articulation Agreements

- 15.1 Articulation is defined as the process leading to the recognition of credit rating of a named qualification of another institution or organisation creating the opportunity to transfer credit and enable student entry from the named institution or organisation with advanced standing and specific credit to a named University award. The articulation takes the form of blanket recognition for all students who have taken the partner course and who then have the right to join or register for the articulated programme.
- 15.2 Articulation is a judgement by the University about the curriculum, its delivery and assessment by the partner or other institution and the learning environment at those institutions.

Institutional recognition

- 15.3 Before an Articulation Agreement can be developed, institutions/organisations that are not already partners of the University have to be recognised as a partner of the University. The due diligence process to consider a potential partner organisation follows the procedures outlined in section B of the AQS Handbook.

- 15.4 When developing a Cohort Learning Agreement for a specified employer, it will be the responsibility of the Faculty to cost this exercise and agree recovery of these costs with the client.

Programme recognition

- 15.5 Programme recognition is the process of formal approval of programmes in terms of credit points and level assigned to demonstrable learning that has taken place at institutions the University has entered into an Articulation Agreement with. Programme recognition results in the award of specific credits and levels of credit for named University awards.
- 15.6 See section H of the AQS Handbook for details of the material to be supplied by institutions seeking an articulation arrangement.
- 15.7 The Faculty will appoint a suitably qualified internal Assessor to map the syllabus and learning outcomes of the articulating programme to the relevant Programme Specification and Cohort Learning Agreement using the University's level descriptors and credit ratings for standard modules. The Assessor will determine the level and volume of credit of the articulating programme.
- 15.8 The Accreditation and Approvals Board (AAB) will be responsible for the approval of any articulation arrangements. The evidence required for consideration by the AAB is described in section H of the AQS Handbook. This should be submitted to Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) after institution approval has been granted.
- 15.9 Where the AAB is asked to consider concurrent approval of an articulation arrangement that forms part of a new cohort Learning Agreement the following additional documentation will be required:
- Signed report from the Subject Expert
 - Signed report from the Independent Briefer (see annex E)
 - Programme Specification
 - Framework Specification
- 15.10 The proposal and supporting evidence should be submitted to AQS five weeks before the AAB meeting. The AAB may require the proposal to be considered by an external subject expert. The sponsoring faculty may be asked to nominate an appropriate candidate.
- 15.11 The AAB has the power to approve Articulation Agreements on behalf of QEC. If there is any concern regarding approval, the AAB may request further evidence or a meeting with the proposers of the agreement. As part of the approval process the AAB may set conditions of approval. Normally, a representative of the proposers will be invited to attend the meeting of the Board.
- 15.12 Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) will notify the faculty of the outcomes of AAB consideration, outlining where relevant any conditions of approval. Once any conditions have been met, AQS will arrange for the preparation of the Articulation Agreement as described in Section H of the AQS Handbook.
- 15.13 Articulation Agreements will be monitored via the mechanisms described in Section H of the AQS Handbook.

16 Approval of New Award Titles

- 16.1 If a new award title is to be added to the Masters by Learning Agreement Framework the process for the consideration of the new award follows the procedure for the approval of new awards described in section B of the AQS Handbook.
- 16.2 Consideration will only be given to new award titles where a cohort demand has been identified. Bespoke award titles for individuals will not be considered.
- 16.3 When approval for the new award title is granted by Academic Directorate the sponsoring faculty will be responsible for preparing a new Programme Specification for consideration by the Accreditation and Approvals Board (See section 13.2 onwards).

17 Accreditation of Prior Learning

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) – Individuals

- 17.1 Accredited Prior Certificated Learning is credit awarded for learning for which certification has been awarded by an educational institution or are recorded on a recognised UK qualifications framework. This learning has been assessed and provided that it is appropriate in terms of content, level, currency and is from a reputable organisation, it can be recognised towards the requirements of the award.
- 17.2 It is the responsibility of the student seeking APCL to provide evidence to support their claim. This would normally be a formal transcript from the awarding institution supported by details of the assessment and award. Credit for certificated professional qualifications or training courses may require additional information about the awarding institution.
- 17.3 Within the MALA Framework there is no requirement for curriculum matching, although the consideration of APCL claims will be made in the context of the relevant Programme Specification. All students who present successful claims for APCL will normally be admitted with advanced standing which will be recorded in the Learning Agreement.
- 17.4 Applications for APCL will normally be considered by the designated Admissions Tutor in the relevant faculty who may call on relevant subject expertise as appropriate. Decisions regarding the accreditation of prior learning are a matter of academic judgement.
- 17.5 Where APCL is included in a Learning Agreement, it will not be graded.
- 17.6 If during the consideration of the APCL claim, it is deemed that the certificated learning is out of date, the claim will be re-routed through the APEL process whereby the candidate can demonstrate how they have maintained their subject knowledge/kept up to date etc.
- 17.7 Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning is normally considered to be part of the recruitment and enrolment process and will not be charged a fee.
- 17.8 If the claim for APCL relates to a whole cohort, seeking 'blanket' approval of certificated learning for inclusion in a Cohort Learning Agreement, see section 15 Articulation Agreements below.

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

- 17.9 Students submitting claims for the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) are claiming that learning has taken place, but such learning has not been formally identified or assessed. In some instances students can make use of prior experiential learning to contribute to credit for an award for which they are already registered. As for any other experiential learning, outcomes must be assessed to gain credit.
- 17.10 The assessment of APEL evidence for advanced standing upon entry to an award in the Framework will normally be by examination of a portfolio of evidence produced by the candidate, during the construction of the Learning Agreement. The portfolio is assembled under the guidance of the WBL Facilitator or other relevant person (i.e. APEL mentor) and the candidate's supervisor.
- 17.11 The APEL evidence is assessed for level and volume by the Subject Expert as part of the process for agreeing the Learning Agreement.
- 17.12 All claims for APEL are scrutinised by the nominated Subject Expert who completes the relevant form (See Annex D).
- 17.13 The AAB will delegate the consideration and approval of APEL claims to faculties that have in place relevant expertise and structures to undertake this function.
- 17.14 As credit is being awarded by giving advanced standing, APEL portfolios should be retained until the next Module Assessment Board (MAB) and made available to the relevant external examiner to scrutinise on a sampling basis. The MAB will consider APEL credits in the same way that success in any other module is considered.
- 17.15 Where APEL is included in a Learning Agreement, it will not be graded.

Maximum APL claims (APCL and APEL)

- 17.16 The maximum prior credit that can be awarded to a student is no more than two thirds of the award for which they are registered. For the awards within the Masters by Learning Agreement Framework this is:

PgCert	40 of the 60 credits required
PgDip	80 of the 120 credits required
Masters	120 of the 180 credits required

- 17.17 Prior experiential and/or certificated learning that contributes to any award within the Framework will be identified on students' transcripts.

18 Enrolment

- 18.1 Each Faculty will be responsible for making appropriate arrangements, following approval of the Learning Agreement by the relevant Faculty Committee for the enrolment of students.
- 18.2 All students on awards within the Framework will be registered within SITs and will have individual module records held within CAMs.

19 Fees

- 19.1 Fee levels will be determined by the relevant Faculty and presented annually to the University Fees Group for approval.

20 Periods of Registration

- 20.1 Students registered on awards within the Framework are normally registered in the part-time mode. The maximum period of registration will normally be four years. Variants to the normal four years will be recorded in the relevant programme specification.
- 20.2 Students must enrol for at least 15 credits in a course year unless they have been granted permission by the Course Director or equivalent to suspend their enrolment (time out). In this exceptional case, the registration period will be extended.
- 20.3 Students can request a temporary suspension of studies. Such requests must be submitted to the Course Director or appropriate member of staff for approval.
- 20.4 If at the end of the four years a student had not been awarded a Master's degree, the Programme Assessment Board will approve the award of either a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate depending on the number of credits achieved. Students with insufficient credit for an award will receive a transcript of credit.
- 20.5 In a limited number of cases a student's registration will be terminated by the University. Situations in which this might occur are:
- Failure to complete modules within the permitted re-assessment opportunities
 - Failure in a greater number of credits than that allowed by the Postgraduate Credit Framework
 - Failure to complete the agreed programme within the registration period or any agreed extension thereof
 - The event that a student persistently fails to make contact with, or respond to, requests for information from the University.
 - Being in poor financial standing with the University
- 20.6 If it becomes necessary to terminate registration, students would be entitled to a Transcript detailing the credit achieved prior to termination. This would include all modules successfully completed, or an appropriate award assuming sufficient credit is accumulated for a PgDip or PgCert.

21 Student Support

Supervisory Arrangements

- 21.1 All students registered for awards within the Masters by Learning Agreement Framework will be allocated a Lead Supervisor with relevant expertise in the subject area concerned. Suitability of a proposed academic supervisor will be confirmed by the managing faculty. Where appropriate, students will be allocated a Workplace Mentor. However, there may be some circumstances where this is not appropriate. There may be other academic supervisors involved for individual WBL modules.

- 21.2 For Cohort Programmes, faculties may decide to nominate a named Course Director or Cohort Lead who will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the programme

Academic Support

- 21.3 Students enrolled on awards within the Masters by Learning Agreement are entitled to access any study skills support offered by the University. During the negotiation of the Learning Agreement, the WBL Facilitator will discuss any study skills requirements with the Candidate and refer, as appropriate, to University resources.
- 21.4 The Supervisor will discuss with the student any on-going requirements that might emerge once the programme has commenced and refer to relevant resources or services.

Pastoral Support

- 21.5 The Student Handbook will provide details of local School/Faculty and University support services.

22 Tracking students

- 22.1 Faculties may wish to consider the introduction of progress reports/progression monitoring that assures the progress of learners and alerts the faculty to issues that might affect the smooth progression of learners who are typically at a distance from the University and whose pace of study can be variable. Examples of tracking mechanisms used by other WBL providers are available from the Academic Development Centre.

23 Assessment

Submission dates

- 23.1 The Framework recognises that part-time students engaged in part-time learning will need to be flexible in their study and that work and life commitments will mean that students will undertake their assignments at different paces. It is however, important to ensure that all students registered within the Framework are progressing at a reasonable rate.
- 23.2 It is up to faculties to set submission dates, which will be published annually.
- 23.3 Students must submit a written request to extend the submission dates beyond those agreed. Student handbooks will identify the person with delegated authority to allow an extension.
- 23.4 Standard University regulations pertaining to non-submission or late submission of coursework apply.

Formative Assessment

- 23.5 Students are normally allowed to submit a complete draft of a module assignment to the academic supervisor for formative assessment.

Summative Assessment

- 23.6 Students are required to submit two copies of each module assignment. One is kept on file and the second is sent out for marking. Students are issued with a receipt.
- 23.7 The designated Assessor, as detailed in the Learning Agreement is then sent the following for each assignment:
- The submitted assignment
 - A Module Assessment Form (Annex G) which is completed during marking
 - The relevant Learning Outcomes Record (Section 5 from the Learning Agreement)
- 23.8 All work within the Framework is assessed against the published Postgraduate Grade Criteria (see annex F).
- 23.9 It is the responsibility of each Faculty to agree the arrangements for moderation and double-marking.
- 23.10 The student's work and the Module Assessment Form are returned for administrative processing. The student receives the feedback form and the provisional grade.
- 23.11 During visits to the University the External Examiner will be invited to review the assessed work.
- 23.12 Completed Module grades are considered at the Module Assessment Board.

24 Regulations

- 24.1 The awards approved within the MALA Framework will be governed by the University's Postgraduate Credit Framework (PCF). The Module and Programme Assessment Boards will apply the PCF in all their deliberations.

25 Mitigating Circumstances

- 25.1 Each Faculty will be responsible for ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that mitigating circumstances claims from Framework students can be considered in an appropriate manner.

26 Module Assessment Boards (MAB)

- 26.1 A Module Assessment Board will be established for each cognate subject area. It is at the discretion of each Faculty to determine the most appropriate means to consider the WBL provision – either separately or as part of existing MAB arrangements. However, it is highly recommended that where feasible, the Masters by Learning Agreement provision is integrated into the MAB structure of cognate subjects.
- 26.2 It is the responsibility of the MAB to:
- Agree grades for all students registered on modules contributing to the Learning Agreement provision
 - Be responsible for the academic standards of modules and of groups of cognate modules

- Recommend to the appropriate Programme Assessment Board, the form of reassessment required in the case of failure

Membership of the MAB

26.3 The MAB will normally be chaired by the Head of School responsible for the cognate group of modules (subject). It will also typically include:

- Relevant field leaders
- First supervisor of the students under consideration
- All relevant external examiners appointed to audit standards in the modules under consideration
- Clerk

The membership of the MAB will be confirmed annually.

26.4 The frequency of meetings will be determined by the Faculty.

27 Programme Assessment Board (PAB)

27.1 A Programme Assessment Board will be established for cognate clusters of awards. It is at the discretion of each Faculty to determine the most appropriate means to consider the WBL provision – either separately or as part of existing PAB arrangements. However, it is highly recommended that where feasible, the Masters by Learning Agreement provision is integrated into the PAB structure of cognate subjects.

27.2 It is the responsibility of the PAB to:

- Agree recommendations for awards and/or progression
- Be responsible for the academic standards of courses and awards
- Agree in the case of failure, reassessment requirements based upon the recommendations of the MAB.

Membership of the PAB

27.3 The PAB will normally be chaired by a senior member of staff responsible for the course(s) i.e. Head of School. It will also typically include:

- Cohort Lead/Course Director
- External examiners appointed to audit the standards of awards and courses
- Representative from either ADC or Academic Quality and Standards (AQS)
- Clerk

The membership of the PAB should be confirmed annually.

27.4 The frequency of meetings will be determined by the Faculty.

28. External examiners – role and appointment

28.1 The appointment of all University external examiners is as defined in Section I of the AQS Handbook. It will be the responsibility of each Faculty offering provision within the

Framework to ensure that there are sufficient external examiners with relevant expertise to oversee both individual and cohort programmes of study.

28.2 The Faculty Quality Committee will be responsible for ensuring that all awards within the Masters by Learning Agreement Framework are allocated to an external examiner.

28.3 Following the approval of any new external examiners to awards within the Framework, the Faculty will send the examiner appropriate programme documentation, details of the parts with which he or she will be concerned, any approved variants to the University regulations, a schedule of assessment and past examiners' reports. In addition to the University external examiner induction, the Head of School (or equivalent) will arrange a local induction meeting in order to agree a schedule of work for the first year of appointment which will allow the external to carry out their duties.

28.4 Academic Quality and Standards will ensure that new external examiners appointed MALA awards receive the following documentation following appointment:

- MALA Framework document
- MALA Framework specification
- Relevant programme specification

29. Transcripts

29.1 All students successfully completing awards, intermediate awards or who have accrued credit that is not sufficient for an award will be issued with a Transcript. The Transcript will always be accompanied by a copy of the relevant individual or cohort Learning Agreement.

30. Staff Student Consultation

30.1 It will be the responsibility of the Faculty to ensure that there are appropriate mechanisms in place, taking account of the nature of the provision, to ensure that the core University requirements for student consultation are in place. Examples of the types of consultation might include annual questionnaire or electronic discussion forum for students (via Blackboard) that might include provision for a suggestion box, a chat room or support group. There should be evidence that issues raised by students are actioned, if appropriate, and reported back to students for information. The Board of Study will be responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the chosen methods.

31. Quality Assurance Arrangements

31.1 Standard University Quality Assurance arrangements will apply to all provision within the MALA Framework.

31.2 The Board of Study will be the primary locus for the quality monitoring of the awards within the Framework. The Board of Study will utilise Template F2: Board of Study Standard agenda items (Section F of the AQS Handbook).

31.3 Because of the nature of the MALA awards Module Review and Development Plans are not required.

- 31.4 It will be the responsibility of each Faculty offering awards within the Masters by Learning Agreement Framework to put in place a structure to ensure that these functions can be carried out effectively. It will be up to the Faculty to determine whether this is through the establishment of a separate Board of Study or integration with existing Board of Study arrangements that could ensure comparability with other equivalent provision (particularly in terms of level and subject).
- 31.5 The responsibility of the Board of Study is as defined in the Preface to the AQS Handbook. Additionally, the Board of Study will:
- Ensure that student feedback is undertaken and analysed
 - Identify and disseminate good practice
 - Report to the Accreditation and Approvals Board (AAB) annually on any issues relating to the operation of the Masters by Learning Agreement Framework
- 31.6 The Board of Study will report to the relevant Faculty Board, but may make recommendations directly to the Faculty Quality Committee.
- 31.7 The AAB will be responsible for drawing together conclusions, good practice or points of action arising from the faculty consideration of Masters by Learning Framework provision.
- 31.8 MALA awards will be included within the relevant Internal Subject Review (ISR).

32. Roles and Responsibilities

32.1 Head of School/Department/Area (or equivalent)

The Head of School has overall responsibility for the delivery of the academic programmes of study within their school.

32.2 WBL Facilitator

The designated lead within the faculty with responsibility for the delivery and oversight of student programmes. Facilitators are members of academic staff with specific responsibility for the negotiation and development of Learning Agreements.

32.3 Course Director/Cohort Lead

Faculties may decide to appoint a Course Director or Cohort Lead for awards within the Framework. The precise nature of the role will be defined by each faculty.

32.4 The Subject Expert

The Subject Expert is appointed to provide subject specific comment to the relevant Faculty committee or AAB on the suitability and coherence of individual and cohort programmes of study within the Masters by Learning Agreement Framework. The Subject Expert is usually selected from within the University, but should be independent of the delivery and design of the programme. There may be instances where there is not sufficient expertise within the University and the Subject Expert could be designated from the student's workplace. In this case the Subject Expert would be expected to submit a short CV to the supervisor.

The Subject Expert will be asked to consider the appropriateness of the proposed curriculum and complete a brief report (Annex D) recommending to the relevant Faculty committee one of three options:

- Approval
- Amendment as outlined in the report
- Non approval

32.5 *Workplace Mentor*

There may be instances where a workplace mentor may be appointed. The mentor will normally be somebody with knowledge and experience of the field the student is working in, but should have no direct line management responsibility for the student. They could be a member of staff within the employer organisation or someone from a different employer. Workplace mentors may fulfil some of the following functions:

- Offer practical advice and guidance to assist the student with the completion of their learning objectives
- Encourage the student to reflect on their experiences and assess what has been learnt, helping them to connect theory with work-based activity
- Work through issues with the student and help them to develop the skills to identify and solve problems for themselves
- Share their own experiences and transfer knowledge, often offering a different perspective or set of expertise to that of the immediate line-manager
- Help to build the student's confidence, by providing encouragement, support and constructive feedback
- Promote open discussion, and encourage openness and honesty from the student
- Listen, be sympathetic and understanding, whilst always maintaining a positive approach
- Maintain discretion and confidentiality regarding any matters discussed with the student

32.6 *Other support roles*

There will be instances where it is appropriate for students to be allocated alternative sources of support – e.g. professional supervisor.

FRAMEWORK SPECIFICATION FOR MASTERS AWARDS BY LEARNING AGREEMENT

A. NATURE OF THE AWARD

Awarding Institution:	Kingston University
Programme Accredited by:	None
Final Award(s):	Masters, PgDip, PgCert
Intermediate Award(s):	PgDip, PgCert

Field Titles:

Masters by Learning Agreement – individually designed programmes leading to:

Faculty of Art, Design & Architecture

MA/MSc Sustainability in Practice
MA Professional Practice (Design)

Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

MA Education

Faculty of Business & Law

MA Business & Management Practice
MA Coaching Supervision
MA Consultancy Practice
MA Health Management
MA Innovation & Entrepreneurship
MA Leadership Practice
MA Market Research
MSc Market Research Management Practice
MA Professional Practice
MA Project Management Practice
MA Career and Talent Management
PgCert/PgDip Human Resource Management Practice
PgCert/PgDip Human Resource Management Practice (French Language delivery)
PgCert/PgDip/MA Organisational Learning & Development
PgCert/PgDip/MA Organisational Learning & Development (French Language delivery)

Faculty of Computing

MSc Professional Computing

Faculty of Engineering

MSc Technology (Engineering)
MSc Technology (Maritime Operations)
MSc Professional Engineering

Faculty of Health & Social Care Science

MSc Healthcare
MSc Healthcare Education & Clinical Leadership

FHEQ Level: Masters

Credit Rating by level 180 @ level 7 (=level M) up to 30 credits may be at L6

JACs code:	See individual Programme Specifications
QAA Benchmark Statement(s):	See individual Programme Specifications
Min/Max Registration Period:	Full-time: min = one year, max = two years Part-time: min = one year, max = four years Variants to the standard registration periods should be indicated in the relevant award programme specification.
Faculty:	Current participating Faculties are: Engineering; Business and Law; Art, Design & Architecture; Health & Social Care Sciences, Art and Social Science, CISM
Location:	Typically in the workplace
Date Specification Revised:	May 2008

B. FEATURES OF THE FIELD

1. Title

For complete list of awards within this framework see above.

2. Modes of Delivery

The field is offered in the following alternative patterns: Part time / Full time This is a work-based learning framework, with candidates supported by an academic supervisor.

3. Features of the Field

The awards available within the Framework recognise the learning involved in completing work-based modules and awards for learning that takes place at work, allowing students to be credited for what they are learning, and the contribution they are making to their organisation's success.

The key to the Master's Degree by Learning Agreement is its flexibility – a Learning Agreement can consist entirely of individually designed modules based on current and future work activities, for which students submit evidence of achievement.

The successful completion of a set of learning outcomes contained within a module is translated into credits, and points will be awarded as the tasks are completed. A Master's degree will be awarded when 180 points are accumulated. A large proportion of learning undertaken by working professionals is at Master's level, and the allocation of credit points to any programme of learning, whether inside or outside the University, provides a national measure of the amount of learning involved. Credit allocation for learning outside the University is the same as inside, and the same quality assurance applies. University accreditation therefore provides a clear indication that work-based learning meets the criteria of a national standard.

Each award title offered within the Framework has an associated Programme Specification. This is designed to capture the key characteristics of that programme: high level aims and learning outcomes and the link to subject benchmark statements. The Programme Specifications form appendices to this Framework Specification.

C. EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE FIELD

This flexible Masters programme aims to:

- Provide a challenging and stimulating framework of study with flexibility in learning opportunities.
- Provide a flexible framework, which allows students to follow a coherent programme of study, which may include, APL, university PG taught units, M level accredited and assessed short courses, and individual work-based learning proposals.
- Develop a holistic understanding of relevant knowledge and a critical awareness of current issues at the forefront of the appropriate academic discipline.
- Facilitate personal, academic and professional development through a coherent programme of study.
- Encourage students to develop high level knowledge in a defined work context.
- Provide an opportunity for students to develop conceptual understanding and to apply this learning in the work place.
- Develop conceptual understanding which enables the student to evaluate critically current research and apply it synergistically to the workplace.
- Provide students with the opportunity to develop and use high-level key skills (including the skills identified in the University's Skills Framework).

D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (OBJECTIVES) OF THE FIELD

NOTE: It is not possible to break down the Learning Outcomes into the suggested headings as each programme is individually designed.

Generic Learning Outcomes of the Framework (independent of programme of study)

Students will be able to demonstrate ability to:

- Take primary responsibility for the planning and management of a coherent M level programme of study.
- Propose work-based learning projects using mastery of the relevant body of knowledge.
- Select and apply appropriate techniques and methods of enquiry, analysis and synthesis related to the subject.
- Research topics and devise and sustain arguments related to the specific subject area.
- Critically evaluate current research paradigms and seek to advance scholarship related to the subject area.
- Take responsibility for their own learning.
- Carry out agreed work based modules at Master's level within the subject area.
- Communicate relevant information in a manner appropriate to the subject, level and the intended audience.
- Develop high-level key transferable skills.

Additionally each programme of study will incorporate the University's Skills Framework. Negotiated programmes will provide learners with the opportunity to develop and progress skills as appropriate for the discipline and level of the student.

E. FIELD STRUCTURE

Duration - Normally two/three calendar years from enrolment (duration varies according to award title)

Structure - Programmes are individually designed and follow the needs of the student

Modules - Each programme is individually designed and thus no general statement can be made.

This field is part of the University's Postgraduate Credit Framework. Fields in the PCF are made up of modules which are designated at level M (a small amount of Level 6 credit (maximum 30) may occasionally contribute to a postgraduate course). The minimum requirement for a Postgraduate Certificate is 60 credits, for a Postgraduate Diploma 120 credits and a Masters degree 180 credits. In some instances the Certificate or Diploma may be the final award and Certificates and Diplomas may be offered to students who only complete specified parts of a Masters degree. The awards available are detailed in section A and the requirements are outlined below. All students will be provided with the PCF regulations and specific additions that are sometimes required for accreditation by outside bodies are outlined below and will be provided in detail for students in student handbooks.

Note: Module credit values may vary from that stated in the PCF – see below Section L.

F. FIELD REFERENCE POINTS

This field is underpinned by both the Framework for HE Qualifications and the University Level descriptors. In addition it complies with the QAA Academic Infrastructure.

G. TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

This field consists of individually designed clusters of learning (WBL modules) performed in the workplace. Before embarking on this field a Learning Agreement is prepared. This represents an agreement between the student, the University and where relevant the employer.

Generically, the field may be described as self-directed distance learning. The key to this strategy is the role of the academic supervisor. S/he is expected to guide the student through the various learning activities that make up the course. This support can be in the form of face-to-face meetings or email / telephone tutoring.

A further unique feature of this field is its flexibility. A coherent programme of learning can be assembled from:

- Negotiated Work-based learning modules
- Prior certificated learning
- Prior experiential learning
- Validated modules selected from existing courses within the University
- Accredited short courses
- Accredited programme of study provided by an employer
- Accredited modules or courses offered by an employer

The aim is always to provide a coherent programme that is centred on the needs of the student or their employer.

H. ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

The aim of this field is to employ a range of assessments that are appropriate to the individually designed programme.

Thus in addition to written reports and presentations, further modes of assessment could include drawings, plans, databases, spreadsheets and so on. Candidates would be expected to identify the M level learning via a summary report.

A common assessment strategy involves the student assembling evidence of learning produced as a normal part of their work and presenting this with an overall report that links this evidence and at the same time demonstrates achievement of the learning outcomes at M level.

In many programmes, part of the final stage of the Masters award consists of producing an academic paper suitable for publication. Here the student must identify a suitable publication and then conform to the editorial requirements of the chosen publication. Many students are asked to produce an extended reflective summary followed by a presentation and viva that examines the learning achieved during the complete programme and how this has been put into practice in the workplace.

I. ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS

1. The minimum entry qualifications for the field are:

The minimum entry qualification is not defined. Instead, an evaluation is made by the work-based learning facilitator of whether the prospective candidate has the opportunity and capability to work at Master's level. All applications are considered by authorised admissions staff in the relevant faculty. Individual Programme Specifications will define the minimum entry qualifications and or relevant experience.

J. CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

The vast majority of students who have enrolled on this programme are already employed. However, contact with graduates from this course has indicated that the programme greatly enhances their career prospects both within and out with their current company / organisation.

K. INDICATORS OF QUALITY

The quality of the course is currently assessed from both student evaluation and external examiner reports. Annual monitoring procedures are followed.

L. APPROVED VARIANTS FROM THE UMS/PCF

Credit values of modules:

Normally blocks of learning outcomes will be a minimum of 7.5 credits and where practicable, will be in 15 credit multiples, although other credit values will commonly occur i.e. 10 credits. Each block and associated assessment will be considered as a "module" and the University Postgraduate Credit Framework applied accordingly.

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This Programme Specification is an annex to the Framework Specification and should be read in conjunction with that Specification. Individual and cohort Learning Agreements relating to the award described below will be an annex to this document. The sections entitled Learning and Teaching Strategies and Structure of the Award are optional. If when completing this specification you feel that additional detail that describes for example specific teaching and learning input from a third party provider, or the contribution of taught modules please include this. Likewise, if a structure diagram would assist in the understanding of the award please include.

Further guidance on completing the template is available in section CG(vi) of the Academic Quality and Standards Handbook 09/10.

Award Title:

Programme Accredited by:

JACs code:

QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s):

Faculty:

School:

Date specification produced:

1. EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE FIELD

List the broad educational aims of the field in bullet form. Aims should be presented separately for PgCert, PgDip and Masters.

2. KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

Indicate the key learning outcomes that a learner exiting with this award would be expected to demonstrate.

3. LEARNING & TEACHING STRATEGIES (optional)

4. STRUCTURE OF THE AWARD (optional)

5. FIELD REFERENCE POINTS

6. ENTRY CRITERIA

Minimum entry criteria for the award:

7. PERIOD OF REGISTRATION (If different from the standard registration period included in the Framework Specification)

Learning Agreement

Section 1

This form outlines a Learning Agreement which expresses the nature and content of the programme of learning you wish to undertake, its relationship to any prior learning claims you are making and the credit you will be awarded towards a qualification. It forms the agreement between you and Kingston University but it may be re-negotiated if necessary at any stage. **You are asked to check carefully the information on this form and then to sign it.**

Name:		Student ID:	
Home address:			
Home telephone:		Mobile:	
E-mail :			
Expected award:			
Company Name:			
Company address:			
Mentors name:			
Telephone:			
E-mail:			
Academic Supervisor:			
Work address:			
Telephone:			
Mobile:			
Time period of this Learning Agreement:			
Version:			
I accept the learning agreement set out below and agree to abide by the regulations.			
Signature of Student:		Date:	
Signature of Mentor:		Date:	
Signature of Academic Supervisor:		Date:	

Section 2	
Candidate Name:	
Award:	
Project Title:	
The Company context:	
The Candidates' current experience and learning:	
The Aim of the Master's Programme:	
Proposal for the Master's Programme:	
Link to the relevant Programme Specification:	

Section 3: Proposal for the Master's programme

The programme will consist of the following:

Candidate:

Award:

Module	Learning Outcomes	Credit value	Level	Proposed start date	Proposed submission date	Letter grade
APCL/APEL						N/A
A						
B						
C						
D						
E						
F						
G						

Section 4: Level Descriptors for M Level

The Assessment Criteria in the Learning Outcomes Record for each Module are specific to your programme of work. They incorporate the University's criteria of the characteristics of learning expected in a Master's degree. The University's criteria apply to both taught and work-based programmes. It is vital that your work demonstrates evidence of these characteristics, as well as complying with the particular Assessment criteria specified for each Learning Outcome.

Operational Context

The context of the learning will have the following characteristics:

- It should be complex with elements of unpredictability, demanding innovative work which may involve exploring the current limits of knowledge (either theoretical or applied)
- A high level of responsibility for self and possibly for others
- An awareness of ethical dilemmas likely to arise in research/professional practice.

Cognitive/Intellectual

The learner will demonstrate:

- Depth of knowledge in a complex and specialised area and/or a considerable breadth of knowledge across specialised and applied areas
- An ability to deal with complexity, lacunae and contradictions in a complex knowledge base using appropriate methods
- Independent evaluation of alternative approaches (including their own) together with the ability to report this accurately
- A confident response to problems by autonomously synthesising information/ideas to provide solutions

Key/Transferable Skills (taken from Kingston University's Skills Framework)

The extent to which these qualities are expected would be indicated to the learner and not all aspects would be present in each element of work undertaken.

The learner will:

Self Awareness Skills

- Take responsibility for own learning and plan for and record own personal development
- Recognise own academic strengths and weaknesses reflect on performance and progress and respond to feedback.
- Organise self effectively, agreeing and setting realistic targets, accessing support where appropriate and managing time to achieve targets.
- Work effectively without supervision in unfamiliar contexts

Communication Skills

- Express ideas clearly and unambiguously in writing and the spoken word (including CV writing)
- Present, challenge and defend ideas effectively
- Actively listen to ideas of others in an unbiased way

Interpersonal Skills

- Work well with others in a group or team
- Work flexibly and respond to change.
- Discuss and debate with others and make concessions to reach agreement.
- Give, accept and respond to constructive feedback
- Show sensitivity and respect for diverse values and beliefs

Creativity and Problem Solving

- View problems from a range of perspectives to find solutions to problems
- Imagine, create and exploit ideas
- Work with complex ideas and justify judgements made through effective use of evidence

Research and Information Literacy

- Search for and select relevant sources of information
- *Critically evaluate information and use it appropriately*
- Apply the ethical and legal requirements in both the access and use of information
- Accurately cite and reference information sources
- Use software and IT technology as appropriate

Numeracy Skills

- Handle and understand number as required for context
- Interpret and apply data to inform judgements

Management and Leadership Skills

- Determine the scope of a task (or project).
- Identify resources needed to undertake the task (or project) and to schedule and manage the resources.
- Evidence ability to successfully complete and evaluate a task (or project), revising the plan where necessary
- Motivate and direct others to enable an effective contribution from all participants

Unless otherwise stated, work-based documents may be of any length providing they indicate Master’s level of presentation and content

Candidate:

Award:

Module & credit value (D)	Aims of the Module (I)	Learning Outcomes (D)	Activities (I)	Assessment Criteria (I)	Mode of Assessment (D)
		On completion of Module *, the candidate will be able to:		The candidate must:	

Resources required	Supervisor(s)	Assessor(s)

I – Indicative elements
D – Definitive elements

Subject Expert's Report

Student's Name:

Award Title:

Programme Facilitator:

Please comment on the following:

- 1. Does the proposed Learning Agreement form a coherent programme of study?**

- 2. Are the subject content and learning outcomes for the individual programme appropriate?**

- 3. Additional Comments (if any)**

Recommendation (please delete recommendations that do not apply):

1. I recommend approval of the proposed programme
2. I propose that the programme proposal should be amended as outlined in the Additional Comments section of this report
3. I propose that the proposed programme should be rejected for the reasons specified in the Additional Comments section of this report.

Name of Subject Expert:

Position:

(if external to KU a brief rationale and c.v. must be appended)

Signature:

Date:

- I propose that the proposed programme should be rejected for the reasons specified in the Additional Comments section of this report.

Name of Independent Assessor:

Position:

Signature:

Date:

POSTGRADUATE GRADE CRITERIA

These Grade criteria were approved at the January 2004 Graduate Development Approvals Board meeting. They are intended to be used in conjunction with the postgraduate levels descriptors and have been designed as a generic framework, intended to provide overall indications of grades to help establish parity and consistency across the University. As such they are broad definitions and are intended to enhance rather than supersede any existing subject specific grade criteria or marking scheme.

Academic judgement should be used as to the extent to which any of the aspects of the grade criteria should be met in a particular piece of assessment. These are general guidelines for written assessment. Assessment criteria relating to practice or performance should be consistent with the characteristics described, but may be expressed slightly differently.

The grade criteria form a continuum from pass to distinction, so that each grade should encompass and build upon the preceding grades.

Letter	Postgraduate Grade Band	Grade Criteria
A+, A and A- >70%	Distinction	Outstanding appreciation and critical review of full range of concepts/literature and issues. Fluent presentation of relevant information and issues, engaging with current debates at a high level. Reflection and evaluation in the text/presentation expressed with a skill and discrimination that enriches and extends the area under study, showing some evidence of originality.
B+, B and B- 60% - 69%	Commendation	Strong grasp of material under consideration with critical appreciation of the range of complexities involved. Effective organisation of relevant information/literature and issues with a considered balance between the two. Reflection and evaluation integrated into the text/presentation with confidence and clarity.

C+, C and C- 50% - 59%	Pass	Competent identification of key concepts/literature and issues, including recognition of contradictions and lacunae. Clear presentation of relevant information and issues. Evidence of reflection on material/evaluation of practice in the text/presentation leading to sound and supported conclusions.
MF 45% - 49%	Marginal Failure	Some knowledge of relevant concepts/literature and issues but with gaps in understanding and/or knowledge. Little attempt at evaluation, conclusions vague, ambiguous and not based in researched material. Deficits in one of more of the following: length, structure, presentation, prose.
F 1% - 44%	Failure	Limited knowledge of concepts/literature and issues, demonstrating little understanding. Inadequate in all or most of the following - evaluation, structure of argument, research and presentation. Work is substantially incomplete and deficient.
F0 0%	Non-submission or non-attendance	Non-submission or non-attendance

Module Assessment Form

Name of Candidate:
Company:
Name of Supervisor:
Name of Assessor:
Date of Submission

Module	Credit Value	Finish Date	Final Grade

Assessor Comments
These comments should describe how the work has passed the assessment criteria and met the module objectives

Signature: Date:

Supervisor Comments

Signature: Date:

Recommended Action:
Only use if there are changes required in the report

Please note that all grades are provisional and subject to change until the Module Assessment Board has been held and recommended grades approved

External Subject Expert Report Template

Before completing this form please refer to the accompanying Guidance Notes

1.	Overall Purpose
1.1	Are the overall aims and objectives/learning outcomes clear and integrated throughout the provision? <i>Comment:</i>
1.2	Are the learning outcomes, curriculum content, teaching and learning strategies and assessment strategies relevant, appropriate and at a level(s) that match the aims/objectives of the programme(s)? <i>Comment:</i>
1.3	As the employment potential of the proposal satisfactory and has there been appropriate consultation with prospective employers? <i>Comment</i>
2.	Curriculum, Design, Content and Organisation
2.1	Is the academic content appropriate, coherent, up to date and complete? Does the programme fit with national subject benchmark standards and the FHEQ? <i>Comment:</i>
2.2	Is the academic level of the award set at the appropriate standard? <i>Comment:</i>
2.3	Is the programme arranged in a logical and justifiable sequence? <i>Comment:</i>
2.4	Does the allocation of module credit reflect the demand on students accurately and is the credit balanced between areas? <i>Comment:</i>
2.5	Has the curriculum been informed by external requirements (Professional Statutory Body, employers etc.) <i>Comment:</i>
3.	Teaching Learning and Assessment <i>(This section should be filled in when a sample Learning Agreement has been provided)</i>
3.1	Is there appropriate linkage between learning and teaching, assessment and module learning outcomes? <i>Comment:</i>
3.2	Are any proposed variations from regulatory norms justified and appropriate? <i>Comment:</i>
3.3	How does the provision develop and assess key skills?

	<i>Comment:</i>
3.4	Is there a variety and balance of assessment methods adopted across the curriculum? <i>Comment:</i>
4.	General comments
5.	Recommendation (*delete as appropriate) unconditional approval* approve with conditions* approve with recommendations* approve with conditions and recommendations* not approve*
6.	Conditions:
7.	Recommendations:
8.	Approve with a time limit of:

Name: _____

Position: _____

Organisation: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

External Subject Expert Report: Guidance Notes

Introduction

1. These notes have been prepared for External Subject Experts reporting to the Approvals and Accreditation Board.
2. Peer review is the principle underpinning the approval and accreditation process.
3. External Subject Experts are asked to report on proposals for Masters Awards by Learning Agreement because of their experience in one or more of the following:
 - professional experience in the subject area
 - as an employer of graduates and diplomates in the area
 - as an experienced academic in the subject area at a similar level of work
4. *Experts, particularly those with a professional/industrial background, are invited to consider whether the award under consideration will produce graduates and diplomates who can satisfy the needs of industry, the professions and public service areas.*

The purpose

5. Approval by the AAB is an academic procedure. The overall aim is to ensure that proposed new awards are likely to be delivered to appropriate standards and quality, within the University's approved regulations and the Academic Infrastructure.
6. The process should focus on academic issues related to a new award rather than matters of structure and regulations. Of particular interest will be the way in which the field is constructed to provide coherence, up to date and appropriate curriculum content, offer appropriate choices, reach clearly stated standards, prepare students for employment/meet the needs of employers (including key skills development) and provide an appropriate quality of student experience

Documentation

7. It is a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) requirement that institutions produce a programme specifications for each field. Programme Specifications are intended to be documents that provide students, parents, employers and external agencies with the key features of the programme. Most of the headings contained within the programme specification have been defined by the QAA.
8. *The External Subject will receive the following:*
 - *Programme specification*
 - *Internal Subject Expert report*
 - *Internal Assessors report*
 - *Draft Learning Agreement*

The External Subject Experts report

- 9 The proforma at Annex H lists some of the issues that we ask you to consider. This list is by no means prescriptive and there may be other areas that have not been covered that you may wish to raise.
10. The proforma is left for you to comment below the specified points, hence will expand to accommodate you comments. You are not required to answer all the questions if you deem it unnecessary. There is space at the end of the proforma for general comments.
11. Please bear in mind that all Masters Awards by Learning Agreement within the University sit within the Postgraduate Credit Framework (PCF) which provide the regulatory and structural framework for all fields. The PCF have been approved by the University's Academic Board.

Possible outcomes

12. The possible outcomes are as follows:
 - Approve the programme unconditionally
 - Approve the programme with recommendations that you feel would enhance the quality of the provision (recommendations are addressed by the field team through annual monitoring)
 - Approve the programme subject to certain conditions (normally conditions must be fulfilled within a specified period before the programme commences)
 - Approve the programme with both conditions and recommendations
 - Non-approval (this will normally involve the programme being referred back to the field team for further development and resubmission)
13. Once an award is in approved it can continue indefinitely, subject to Annual Monitoring and Internal Subject Review. However, the AAB can, if it wishes, limit the approval to a defined period if this is deemed appropriate. The AAB would be required to explain the rationale for such a decision. A team would need to seek re-approval at the end of the qualifying period.

Questions

14. If you have any queries about the validation procedures at Kingston you can contact Neil Owens (Assistant Registrar) by telephone on 020 8417 3655 or by e-mail at N.Owens@Kingston.ac.uk who will be happy to discuss any queries you may have.