

Appendix A: Qualification Descriptors

1. Level 4 (equivalent to Certificate of Higher Education)

Students who successfully complete Level 4 will have demonstrated the following outcomes:

1. knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the course of study and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that subject and
2. an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concept of the subject.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work
- communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments
- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment
- demonstrate the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

2. Level 5 (equivalent to Foundation degree or Diploma of Higher Education)

Students who successfully complete Level 5 will have demonstrated the following outcomes:

1. knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of the subject and the way in which these principles have developed;
2. ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied including where appropriate the application of those principles in a vocational context;
3. knowledge of the main methods of approach to the subject and an ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to problem solving in the vocational area;
4. an understanding of limits of their subject knowledge of how this influences analysis and interpretations of the subject.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis

- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively
- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.
- demonstrate the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

Courses designed with an award at Level 5, such as a Foundation degree, may have a vocational orientation, enabling award-holders to perform effectively in their chosen field, notably in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

3. **Level 6** (equivalent to Honours degree)

Students who successfully complete a course with 120 credits at Level 6 will have demonstrated the following outcomes:

1. a systematic understanding of the key areas of the subject with a good range of contemporary knowledge and practice;
2. a range of techniques and behaviours including analysis and enquiry within the discipline;
3. conceptual understanding that allows them to argue, solve problems, use ideas and techniques appropriate to the subject and describe and comment on particular aspects of research in the discipline;
4. an appreciation of the uncertainty and ambiguity and limits of knowledge of the subject;
5. an ability to manage their own learning as an autonomous practitioner and learner including an ability to reference and research practical and theoretical issues associated with the subject.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – or identify a range of solutions – to a problem
- communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- demonstrate the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts

- the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

Holders of an Honour's degree will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. The holder of such a qualification will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements and to communicate them effectively. They will have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.

4. Level 7 (equivalent to Master's degree)

Students who successfully complete a course at Level 7 will have demonstrated the following outcomes:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.
- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring: – the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Award holders will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.