ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

# Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework

# Contents

# Foreword from our Principal and Vice Chancellor

Our Values at AUB put an emphasis on collaboration and connection, on industry-partnered learning that is designed to enrich every aspect of our curriculum. Through studio practice, technical demonstration and applied knowledge, our students exemplify the spirit of the reflective practitioner – aware, informed, experiential. Yet, as the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework proves, we aim higher.

The LTAF has been co-designed to offer a radically creative approach to arts education, attuned to the era of automation and artificial intelligence but grounded in the disciplines that are at the heart of the AUB ethos; I commend the huge effort that has gone into its design.

We remain acutely aware as educators, that our graduates are at the vanguard of enterprise creation: AUB is one of the leading UK universities in propagating start-ups, young businesses, and emerging entrepreneurs. The LTAF embraces this achievement, building a framework that will not only ensure the continued quality, inclusivity, and equity of our increasingly diverse education provision, but nurture and promote the very spirit of creative enterprise that make us a unique institution of arts, design, media, and performance.



**Paul Gough**
*Principal and Vice Chancellor*
Arts University Bournemouth

# Our Approach to Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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# Aims

**A1**    Provide and maintain the highest quality and consistency of experience across all taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

**A2**    Present our vision for learning, teaching and assessment which is credible, progressive and innovative.

**A3**    Promote learning, teaching and assessment as an experiential journey accessible to all our students.

**A4**    Prepare our students for their future in the creative industries, their future practice, or a portfolio career across a diversity of graduate roles.

**A5**    Pursue excellence to ensure that our curriculum is enlightened, agile and meaningful for AUB now and in the future.

# Introductory Context and Principles

The Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework (LTAF) sets out the University's signature pedagogy and its approach to learning delivery within the creative and performing arts.

Section One sets out the philosophical underpinning of pedagogy at AUB; Section Two is the formal regulatory framework, applicable to all taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses leading to awards of AUB and Section Three details the taught delivery approaches at AUB ensuring that we remain student-centred in all that we do, but with sound and supportive mechanisms for all our staff.

A primary purpose of the LTAF is to support reasonable student expectations, and to deliver consistency and transparency in learning, teaching, assessment and the wider student academic experience.

Everything we do should reflect the AUB values and support us in achieving our strategic goals, and this includes the LTAF: our organisational principles, purpose and direction wrap around and permeate through all aspects and levels of the framework in order to set the tone for our interactions with our students, our staff and all of our stakeholders.

The LTAF has been designed to be sufficiently flexible to not only enable our Schools and Courses to maintain and enhance their distinctiveness but also to aid in their ongoing development for the future. As such, the framework should be read as a live document open to review, critique and, inevitably, change.

AUB prides itself on being a civic university with global connections. We aim to maximise the opportunities of our identity and reputation to make a lasting difference to the prospects of our region and beyond. The LTAF embraces the idea of making a difference and ensures that our curriculum is clear, transparent and inclusive to all students in its principles and aims, with the hope of equipping all our students with the ingredients for success in a diverse and rapidly evolving world.

The AUB Learning Teaching and Assessment Framework is a publicly accessible document which assures all our stakeholders that we not only prioritise currency, clarity and relevance in who we are and what we do but also that we embrace the inherent ambiguity of the future: values-driven; community focused; student-centred and industry-partnered.

Here at AUB we consider that learning, teaching and assessment are an experiential journey which starts before our students join us and continues after they have left. This document acts as the vehicle through which that experience can be understood and appreciated.

# Our University Values: Collaboration, Connection, Innovation and Passionate

Arts University Bournemouth comprises a portfolio of postgraduate, undergraduate and short courses which encompass the collective values, philosophies, identities and aims which are intrinsic to the experience of the University that our staff and students share.

## 1. Collaboration

The learning and teaching journey at AUB promotes collaboration from the moment that students join us: working together with a diverse community; sharing ideas and experiences with colleagues from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds and engaging in projects that enable each student to learn collectively whilst celebrating their individuality.

Collaboration is inherent to contemporary working practices and acts as a microcosm of the creative industries. The safe and accessible application of collaborative working environments are conducive to student learning and help them to develop their respect for difference and forge honesty.

Fundamental to a collaborative working environment is the design of the curriculum, more specifically the place of contextual learning and teaching within our practice.

Contextual learning and teaching at AUB is understood in its broadest sense, not only the valuable historical and theoretical bases of our disciplines to date but also the wider social, political, cultural, industrial and specialist frames of reference that will influence and direct our students' practice in the future.

Our curricula demonstrate the fusion of contextual and practical elements at all stages and levels of study, aligning the meaningful and impactful interrogation of history, theory, culture and society with our students' own interests and their likely career paths.

Collaboration at AUB acts as a force to positively reshape a more diverse and inclusive working environment for the future.

## 2. Connection

We welcome students at AUB from a diversity of backgrounds and nationalities; we aim to meet all students with an inclusive curriculum delivery that is reflexive, agile and engaging, built to connect with every learner. The learning experience at AUB is designed to be accessible to all individual learners, their unique abilities and skillsets; learning fit to build an increasingly equitable creative industries of the future.

In preparation for the globalised world into which our students graduate, the AUB curriculum encompasses the plethora of histories and peoples which shape, make and challenge our disciplines and heritage. Learning on our courses enables students to relate their study and making to their own lived experiences, as well as being able to better understand and relate to different people, cultures and ideas.

Learning and teaching at AUB is accountable to its learners and our courses are operated and revised in ongoing partnership with students. Students from demographic minority groups on campus participate in ongoing discussions on the AUB curricula and students have flexibility and input into their learning pathways, which generates more autonomy in their learning experiences.

When students join AUB they do not relinquish the lived experience and sense of belonging to their own communities but, instead, enrich our shared vision of an inclusive and diverse local and international learning community.

### Diversification

Our curricula must be built to connect with every learner.

In doing so, we acknowledge and aim to challenge the historical and contextual realities of colonialism, imperialism and systems of oppression that have and do exist and which shape and influence our disciplines.

Both our students and our staff are encouraged in an ongoing critical evaluation and challenge to the conscious and unconscious biases and assumptions that underpin our shared knowledge base; to introduce a range of perspectives, voices and experiences and to give equal opportunity to marginalised communities as well as the work of scholars and academics who have been traditionally under-represented.

### Partnership – our students and staff

Everyone at AUB enjoys a co-operative, reciprocal relationship with all who work at the university: we all have obligations as learners, lecturers, researchers, technicians and professional services staff to be clear on the context in which we work; collaborative in the use of resources and showing respect in how we behave and communicate.

We understand the value of working as effective, cross-functional teams of academic, technical and professional services staff who embed collaboration and sharing in order to challenge silo-thinking and remove barriers to achieve a genuinely supportive university experience.

### Partnership – our external supporters, stakeholders and industries

AUB prides itself on being close to, reflecting and leading the diverse industries where our graduates do and will work. In order to maintain and develop our effective connection we develop our staff to ensure that they are always looking up and looking out to ensure that we are genuinely readying our students for life and work now and in the future.

Meaningful industry relationships are an embedded commitment in our curricula: all courses have an industry patron whose primary purpose is to help our students grow the workplace knowledge and skills for developing and leading the cultural and creative institutions of the future; every course incorporates opportunities for industry engagement, such as placement, year-out and graduate attributes, employability skills and work-based learning are fundamental to the design of our courses at every level.

Students at every level are actively encouraged to undertake exchange or study-abroad opportunities whilst they are with us. Whether this be through international industry engagement or with partner institutions overseas, having some experience of the global network in which we all operate is an important part of the University's overall educational offer.

## 3. Innovation

### Technology

Our students are progressing into a future where traditional disciplinary silos will have broken down, a future that will be ever-more skilful and technologically challenging. This demands that we build on established teaching methods through an increasingly broad, inter-, and cross-disciplinary education that will expect an understanding of the role of computation across the arts, design and media: creativity needs technology just as much as technology needs creativity.

We understand that digital technologies and emerging technologies are not a bolt-on, nor an optional consideration for curriculum design or teaching and learning. They are essential to the employability of our students and therefore must run through the various strands of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework as well as at all levels of the university in order that AUB can develop its own digital leaders who will be confident to model good digital practice and innovative approaches to others.

AUB recognises that digital technologies inhabit and touch on all aspects of our lives but that they need to develop and work alongside our excellence in the traditional skills that underpin our courses: our maker culture.

It is vital that in this section of the LTAF we include our position on Artificial Intelligence (AI). The University recognises the power and the potential value of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI), and we support its constructive use to support learning, teaching and assessment. Gen AI can contribute to a high-quality educational experience; used responsibly, it can enhance student learning. In addition, it is important that students understand both the benefits and limitations of Gen AI so that they are able to make informed decisions about its use in their subsequent professional lives.

We aim to ensure that our students will not only be able to access the most effective combination of analogue and digital technologies but also understand that innovation draws inspiration from a social, inclusive, and politically aware context that will drive not only their education but also the industries into which they progress.

### Active Learning

Our learning and teaching practice will promote and encourage innovation through a student-centred, active-learning strategy that moves the focus away from the tutor, towards interdisciplinary teams, using appropriate technologies to support students in developing peer relationships, deeper learning and greater understanding of their disciplines.

### Graduate Futures

The University understands that our students are faced with a world that is undergoing change at an ever-increasing rate and across all areas of our lives: technological, social, cultural, political, economic and environmental.

In this context, the University has recognised the importance of developing graduates who have the attributes to be able to build their career, adapt to different circumstances, embrace change.

As a specialist arts institution, one of our strategic goals is to create opportunity and support the building of competencies for our students, alumni, and staff through a passionate belief in collaboration, creativity, and innovative practice. We want to ensure that AUB graduates build on our AUB values and graduate attributes, developing meaningful careers and making a positive impact on society.

## Graduate Attributes

Our Graduate Futures skills are defined as

**❝ A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community, and the economy. ❞**

Through an innovative, rigorous, and inclusive curriculum informed by current industry practice, students will have every opportunity to develop the skills and attributes necessary to find graduate level work post-graduation.

Graduate Attributes are linked to employability, but their purpose is not only to help students identify and articulate their skills to get jobs – it is about helping students recognise the personal skills, attitudes, behaviours and values they have developed through their studies, and how this makes them adaptable and ambitious and encourages them to think in the broadest terms about their skills and competencies.

Our courses will introduce students to topics which are integrated within the curriculum at every stage of their learning. This will allow the student to structure their career development journey through each level of their course and consider the following stages: Self Awareness, Opportunity Awareness, Decision Making and Transitioning into Work. These align to the AUB Career Readiness stages: Explore, Focus, Engage and Achieve, which have been developed in the Graduate Futures Toolkit.

Such an approach is designed to support the student in the next steps they take after graduation, in whatever direction those may be, and is fundamental to study at AUB.

## 4. Passionate

### Educating the "whole student".

The Learning Teaching and Assessment Framework is the demonstration of our commitment towards the education of the "whole-student": a holistic approach that moves beyond the acquisition of skills and knowledge to include ethical, social and psychological wellbeing and development, in a way that, as far as we reasonably can, considers the strengths, needs and interests of the student.

We pride ourselves on providing a supportive and inclusive learning community that nurtures a sense of belonging through the creation of a space in which our students feel comfortable and confident to be themselves.

The Framework reiterates our pledge to the principle and promotion of freedom of thought, speech and expression for our students, staff and external stakeholders, and their exercise of those rights within the law.

Our courses work to mitigate potential isolation, separation and loneliness by enabling students to develop and build networks both within and beyond their immediate study groups.

Our teaching and learning practice aims to embed diversity in all aspects of our curricula as well as enabling accessibility, parity and consistency in the design of our units, their aims and outcomes.

We will ensure that our assessment and feedback practices and processes are designed to facilitate learning and success; prepares students to be critical and creative learners; are aligned to the Learning Outcomes; are relevant to current and future learning; supports accurate academic judgements on student learning, progress and achievement; supports students to engage in meaningful reflection on their learning; are rigorous in evidencing the work undertaken by the student; are clear and explicit, inclusive and equitable; is timely, clear, respectful, and consistent with the expectations of the assessment task and, above all, supports students to make informed decisions about their current and future learning and development.

### Education accessible to all and inclusive of everyone

The University not only aims to advance its moral, social and legal obligations to put equity at the centre of everything it does but also, through a whole-institution approach, commits to providing access to education for all students irrespective of their background. In doing so, we want to ensure that any barriers to success and progression are removed.

We understand that students from underrepresented backgrounds, seeking a creative education and careers in the creative industries, can be under greater pressure from their families to study more traditional disciplines. We are dedicated to a range of complementary approaches to enable students' successful progression to highly skilled employment or higher-level study that are embedded at all levels across the university:

— supporting and promoting diversity across all our community

— delivering high-quality, innovative teaching which eliminates barriers to engagement and success

— developing academic and professional practice that raises awareness of cultural barriers and challenges implicit bias

— implementing a curriculum in which all our students see themselves represented through an equality impact assessment

— explicit teaching of personal skills, such as debate and discussion

— offering an outstanding student experience that maximises their career opportunities.

### Health and Wellbeing

AUB is committed to adopting a whole-university approach to the health and wellbeing of its staff and students; aims to become a signatory to the University Mental Health Charter and actively promotes good mental health and wellbeing in everything it does, across the whole of the university community.

Our courses expressly promote positive mental health management within their learning, teaching and assessment through activities such as:

— clarity of expectations of workload and pattern across units of study

— clarity of expectations of academic teaching hours, technical support and self-directed study hours

— project planning to support management of student mental health

— reflective student presentations encouraging good mental health

— adopting structures and processes which anticipate pinch-points

— avoidance of bunched assessment points.

The mental, emotional, and physical health of AUB's community is pivotal not just for academic and creative excellence, but for fostering a nurturing and collaborative environment.

### "Academic buoyancy"

Everything we do at AUB shares the simple aim of supporting our students to achieve; hopefully to achieve far more than they thought they were capable.

This does not mean that there will not be setbacks and challenges to overcome during their time with us which are typical of the ups and downs of everyday life at university and are common to all students: poor marks; perceived negative feedback on work from tutors and peers; dips in motivation; anxiety leading to procrastination; poor time management of multiple projects and deadlines; periods of high stress and times of low confidence.

The University is passionate about working collaboratively with our students to help them become more aware of their thoughts, emotions and behaviours when they receive disappointing results or feedback. We also aim to be compassionate in supporting our students to develop positive strategies and techniques for targeting their resilience directly: focusing on constructive responses to poor assessment; re-framing frustrations as learning opportunities; providing reasons for low marks and supporting understanding of how to improve and seeking out further information from tutors on how to progress.

We will strive to ensure that the inevitable challenges of study and university life do not become insurmountable barriers preventing our students reaching their potential.

### Student support

Our academic staff support student wellbeing through the provision of pastoral support and guidance.

At AUB, pastoral support means offering a patient, understanding response to student concerns or distress, providing empathy, time, and kindness.

Academic staff will work within their professional boundaries to help students, for example:

— advising on academic work and research

— providing guidance on extensions or mitigation

— referring to other AUB teams who have the relevant skills and knowledge to offer specialist support

— facilitating meetings with other students or staff.

It is important that students are supported by those who are best placed to help them, and that academic staff maintain their own wellbeing by not going beyond their professional competence in supporting students. Academic staff will signpost students to the support available in Student Services if they feel that the student needs specialist help from staff who are trained and experienced in providing dedicated support.

Academic staff will seek student consent before sharing personal, sensitive information about students. However, academic staff may discuss concerns about a student with Student Services teams to seek advice and guidance, whilst keeping student details anonymous.

Safeguarding over-rides data protection; if a member of staff considers there to be an imminent risk to student safety, information may be disclosed without consent.

### Looking forward

Our students matter, and their future matters.

Through the Learning Teaching and Assessment Framework, AUB will strive to make certain that our staff, our knowledge and skills, our resources, our partnerships, our courses, our units and our learning, teaching and assessment thinking and practices maintain their quality, currency, relevance, and agility in a world of unpredictable but accelerating change.

# The Regulatory Framework[1]

**02**

The Regulatory Framework forms Section 2 of the Arts University Bournemouth Learning Teaching and Assessment Framework (LTAF). It is intended to be used in alignment with Section 1 of the LTAF and reflects the aims and objectives set out within that section; and with Section 3, which provides more detailed guidance and examples of good practice.

The purpose of the Regulatory Framework is to set the parameters for course/curriculum design and delivery at undergraduate and postgraduate taught levels. It reflects and aligns to the educational experience which the University considers most relevant and appropriate for its taught student body, and which responds to its vision, values, and signature pedagogic aspirations.

The University endeavours to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by digital technology to support students from diverse backgrounds. This includes the delivery of online learning where appropriate, either of a whole course or as an augmentation to in-person delivery. All forms of learning are supported by a wide range of high-quality asynchronous materials via the university's VLE (Canvas) which enable students to engage at times which are most suitable for them, while scheduled delivery sessions can be dedicated to activity which is best undertaken 'live' and / or as an in-person activity.

The precepts in this Regulatory Framework, and the Roadmap and Guidance document (LTAF Section 3), apply to all awards and all forms of delivery, whether in-person or online.

The specific objectives of the Regulatory Framework are:

— to ensure that all awards offered by the University are aligned to sector-recognised standards, appropriate to level and subject discipline

— to ensure parity and consistency of the academic experience for all students studying on courses leading to qualifications at the same level

— to support the delivery of the University's Portfolio Plan

— to encourage curriculum design that values innovation and enhances the student experience through collaborative delivery and complementarity between courses

— to maintain high quality provision, teaching and learning practices and assessment methodologies, ensuring these are inclusive and appropriate to the subject and level of study.

AUB's curriculum design will ensure that all students receive an academic experience which is contemporary; informed by current debates in the discipline; prizes innovation; and prepares them for current and future roles within the creative industries and beyond.

In consequence, the University has developed a set of precepts which govern all higher education awards. These precepts are set out below. The qualification descriptors and generic outcomes for each higher education award are set out in Appendix A. Appendix B sets out the regulations for the verification of marks for undergraduate and postgraduate taught awards.

# Regulatory Framework for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Courses

## 1. General principles: units, credits and levels

**1**    The University's curriculum architecture is based on self-contained blocks of learning, known as units, each of which has a coherent set of aims and Learning Outcomes, and associated assessment processes.

**2**    The outcomes required for each unit are expressed as a series of Learning Outcomes (LOs). Attainment of these LOs is the objective of the unit; measuring student attainment is the purpose of the assessment of these LOs. The detailed expression of unit outcomes as Learning Outcomes, and how they are assessed, is included within each written unit descriptor and published for students as accessible documents.

**3**    Whilst units may be related by sequence or content, each unit is essentially freestanding and results in the assessment of defined Learning Outcomes within the period of the unit.

**4**    Unit descriptors outline all units in a common and consistent manner; these are considered and approved at validation as part of the course development process. Unit descriptors provide detail of the level, credit weighting, aims, Learning Outcomes and assessment components.

**5**    All units are credit-rated. The University's Credit Framework is consistent with typical practice across UK higher education, as set out in the sector-recognised standards published by the Office for Students[2].

**6**    'Notional learning hours' are used to describe the size of a unit and indicate the length of learning time estimated to be spent, on average, to achieve the specified Learning Outcomes. In accordance with practice across the UK HE sector, one credit is allocated for ten notional learning hours. This includes all the study time for the unit including taught contact hours (lectures, demonstrations, seminars, tutorials etc), directed study, independent study, and assessment activity (including preparation).

**7**    The amount of credit attached to a unit is determined by the size of that unit, i.e. the amount of time required to complete the necessary learning and assessment to achieve successful outcomes for the unit. As an example, a unit worth 20 credits requires a volume of 200 notional study hours.

[2] see www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/53821cbf-5779-4380-bf2a-aa8f5c53ecd4/sector-recognisedstandards.pdf

**8**    A student successfully completing any unit is awarded the full amount of credit assigned to that unit. The award of credit indicates the achievement of the threshold standard or better within the unit. All Learning Outcomes must be passed for an overall pass to be awarded in the unit. There are no circumstances in which partial credit can be awarded for partial completion or success in particular components or elements of a unit.

**9**    Credit is not used for grading but quantifies the volume of learning and is thus used to determine eligibility for progression or awards. The standard of achievement is signified through the assessment matrix and grading descriptors (see the relevant Assessment Regulations for detail).

**10**    The achievement of credit also facilitates transfer between courses and / or providers by providing an accessible record of achievement. It permits transfer across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), with each credit worth 0.5 ECTS credits.

**11**    Once awarded, credit cannot be taken away or withdrawn as it represents the recognition of achievement. Even if students fail the course for which they are registered or do not complete it, they retain the credit gained and may use it as the basis for negotiating future study at the University or another provider. The only exception to this is where the results of a unit are amended or annulled following a proven case of academic misconduct, as described in the relevant assessment regulations.

**12**    In accordance with the sector-recognised standards, all units are attributed to a level (L4, L5, L6 or L7). The levels indicate the increasing complexity and demands of units as studies progress. The University has developed level descriptors, aligned to the sector-recognised standards, which indicate the typical requirements of units at each level.

**13**    Each full level of undergraduate study comprises 120 credits, or 1200 notional learning hours.

**14**    Level descriptors outline the general characteristics associated with study at each level and provide a template against which units (or the progression of units through a level) may be aligned. The key determining factor in ascribing a level is the complexity of the content and the associated assessment. Hence, two units which appear similar in content may be at different levels if the assessment components differ.

**15**    If a student is admitted with advanced standing, or as a direct entrant to Level 5 or 6 of an undergraduate course, no credit is awarded against units or levels of study to which their previous certificated learning or experience is deemed equivalent, and which they are not required to take. General credit is awarded at the appropriate level of study.

## 2. General principles: named courses and named awards

**16**     The standard of an award is safeguarded by regulations which define requirements for minimum amounts of credit necessary at a given level to satisfy the requirement for that award. The full list of available awards, and the associated credit requirements, is given at Appendix A.

**17**     All approved courses of study will lead to a named award. The naming of courses is the subject of a separate protocol, available from the Quality and Standards team.

**18**     Parentheses may be used to provide an additional focus or specialism to a more generic award title. The element of the award indicated by the parentheses may either be delivered through dedicated units / teaching, or through the particular focus of the work undertaken. For undergraduate awards, this would normally comprise at least 60 credits at Level 6, and some study also at Level 5. Admission will be made to the broad course title, with specialist titles confirmed during Level 5 study, except where there are strong grounds to the contrary. For postgraduate awards, the specialism is likely to be delivered through the focus of work and will be determined before the final 60 credits are commenced.

**19**     All students will be enrolled against an identified target award. If a student successfully achieves their target award and has achieved a volume of credit which would normally allow automatic progression to the next level of a course, the student can instead decide to progress (and revise their target award).

**20**     Subject to certain qualifying conditions, students who do not achieve their target qualification will normally be offered an intermediate (or "exit") award, which reflects the volume and level of credit they have successfully achieved during their period of study. Students will normally be considered for an intermediate award if they are withdrawing from the University and have completed the requisite credit (see the relevant assessment regulations).

**21**     Courses will be designed in accordance with the general requirements for credit and will stipulate any additional requirements specific to that course which students will have to meet to qualify for the award.

**22**     Courses at both postgraduate and undergraduate level recognise the quality of student performance by classifying the final outcome. The details are given in the relevant assessment regulations.

## 3. Admission, registration, progression and award

**23**     Arts University Bournemouth has established an Admissions Policy, which is reviewed annually by Academic Board. Minimum entry criteria are included as an appendix to this policy.

**24**     All students are registered for the named final award to which their course of study leads. Students undertaking standalone units will be allocated to the home course of the unit they are taking.

**25**     The validation process will give detailed consideration to the proposed mode(s) of study for any course, with a particular focus on the quality of the student experience. The addition of further modes of study to an approved course will be treated as a minor amendment in the first instance but, if the panel considers that significant issues are raised, this may be referred to a full validation event. Accelerated study is also permitted for undergraduate courses (see precept 43 below).

**26**     The following maximum periods of registration apply:
Master of Architecture: 5 years
Master of Fine Arts: 5 years
Master of Arts: 4 years
Integrated Master's: 8 years
Honours Degrees: 8 years
Foundation Degrees: 5 years.

**27**     The minimum period of registration for all undergraduate courses and awards is one academic year. The minimum period of registration for all postgraduate courses and awards is one half of the total credit required for the intended award.

**28**     The maximum credit awarded through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) towards the fulfilment of an undergraduate award will not normally be more than two thirds of the total credit required for the award. The maximum credit awarded through RPL towards the fulfilment of a postgraduate taught award will not normally be more than one third of the total credit required for the award.

**29**     A student may change their mode of study (i.e., full-time or part-time) where this alternative mode has been validated and is in operation. Students may also be permitted to study more flexibly, where this meets their needs and still enables a coherent and rigorous academic learning experience. Any proposal for a change of mode of study, or for flexible study, must be approved by the Academic Lead on Standards and Quality or nominee.

**30**     Students may normally only change between modes of study at the start of a level, although exceptions may be made where this would be in the student's interest. The judgement of the student interest is the sole responsibility of the Academic Lead on Standards and Quality or nominee.

**31**        For courses of more than 180 credits, there is a formal progression point at the end of each block of 120 credits. On undergraduate courses, this is the end of a level of study. Students who have not achieved the full balance of credit, through either deferral or failure, will normally be required to achieve this outstanding credit before progressing.

**32**        Students who have completed a level of study and achieved the full balance of credit (including any credits achieved by compensation where this is permitted under the assessment regulations) will progress automatically to the next level of study.

**33**        Exceptionally, and at the sole discretion of the Progression and Awards Board, a student may be permitted to progress conditionally (i.e., with outstanding units which still must be passed). In such cases, the Progression and Awards Board will also set the deadline by which any outstanding assignments must be submitted. If the assignments are passed, progression is confirmed. If the assignments do not pass, and no credit is awarded, the progression decision is automatically revoked. The Progression and Awards Board, or a sub-group of the Board including at least the Chair, the Chair of the Subject Examination Board and an independent member appointed by the Academic Lead on Standards and Quality, confirms the action to be taken (which may be a requirement for academic intermission or, where the failure is irretrievable, the termination of studies).

## 4. Curriculum structure

**34**    The smallest building block within the framework is the standard unit of 20 credits. The regulatory framework does not permit half units, or multiples involving half units.

**35**    The largest unit permitted within the framework is normally 60 credits (which may be one unit at Level 6 only). Exceptionally one 80-credit unit at Level 6 or Level 7 may be approved where this is part of a "closed course" designed specifically to respond to an external demand (for instance, as a dedicated course of study for an employer, or a defined group of overseas students). In consequence, an 80-credit unit is not available for a typical course. At Level 4 and Level 5, the maximum unit size is 40 credits. There are no restrictions on the number of 40 credit units that may be used at any level; the overall course structure will be considered and approved through validation and review.

**36**    There is no standard unit structure; course teams will determine the most appropriate structure to support student progression through the design of the course curriculum. This is likely to see a progressive reduction in the amount of contact time at each level, as students take greater responsibility for their projects through independent learning. The breakdown of study hours for each unit, including scheduled taught activity and independent study, will be communicated in advance via unit descriptors, timetable, and the project scheme of work.

**37**    The expectation is that each student will receive the following number of taught contact hours per unit:

| Level | 20 credits | 40 credits | 60 credits | Total contact for the level |
|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 4 | 50 hrs | 100 hrs | - | 300 hrs |
| 5 | 50 hrs | 100 hrs | - | 300 hrs |
| 6 | 40 hrs | 70 hrs | 90 hrs | 200-220 hrs |
| 7 | 20 hrs | 40 hrs | 60 hrs | 180 hrs |

Taught student contact hours might vary per week/per term in accordance with the subject type, and course, or unit content. There may be variation to these totals within a level of study, such that student contact hours are lower in one unit but correspondingly higher in another unit. Overall student contact hours should match the expected total for the level.

**38**    AUB courses are structured in such a way as to ensure an equitable workload across the taught academic year. Similarly, courses are structured to ensure that student learning is progressive, and early units or levels are used, in part, to prepare students for the demands of the later study requirements.

**39**    Courses may offer Pathway options to allow students to specialise in a specific area of interest, and for these courses, students will take the units assigned to their chosen Pathway. Pathway options represent different routes through the course from a single named admission point, with shared delivery where this is appropriate. Precept 18 above provides details of the credit and naming arrangements for such awards, which must be approved at validation or periodic review. Where a course offers a Pathway, the list of students who are intending to complete a named award must be presented to Registry by mid-point of the final year of study.

**40**    Courses may offer a limited amount of choice, either through offering optional units (which are alternate but course-specific units, available at any level), or through offering elective units (which may include units from other disciplines). The range of optional and/or elective units available will be considered and approved at validation or periodic review.

**41**    Student choice can also be offered through a Learning Agreement. This is common on project units, where the student may have considerable flexibility in how they meet the unit Learning Outcomes. The Learning Agreement offers the student the opportunity to write their own brief and will set out the proposed activities and deliverables (ie what the student will submit for assessment), explaining how these meet the unit Learning Outcomes. The Learning Agreement must be approved by the Unit Leader.

## 5. Study time

**42**    For Master of Arts awards, there are three phases of study, each of fifteen weeks. Subject to cohort viability, there are two entry points in each academic year.

**43**    For all other taught courses, including the Master of Architecture and all undergraduate awards, teaching is delivered over three terms, each of ten weeks, totalling 30 weeks. Thus, the taught year will normally equate to one academic level. Courses may be designed for delivery using a fourth term (during the summer period), providing accelerated learning, where this meets applicant demand and where delivery can be managed. The formally agreed terms of study include the full student learning experience, including assessment, tutorials and academic counselling.

**44**    For part-time awards, or for students who are following a more flexible route, the taught year may not equate to an academic level. Progression between levels will be determined at the end of each level, which will always be at the end of a term.

**45**    Teaching and the submission of assessment tasks will fall within the specified taught time, although students who have not completed the full balance of credit during the scheduled teaching time may be required to retrieve outstanding units during untaught time.

**46**    Educational visits are permitted where they take place during the agreed weeks of study and are arranged in accordance with the Educational Visits Procedure. Arrangements for educational visits, work placement and other activity off campus must permit other units normally taught at that time to be studied appropriately.

**47**    Student Exchange is permitted, in accordance with the University's Student Exchange Policy. The way in which the outcomes of the Exchange will be assessed, and will contribute to the student's overall academic profile, must be agreed through a dedicated Learning Agreement in advance of the Exchange taking place.

**48**    Undergraduate courses include the option for students to undertake a placement year, unless it is exceptionally agreed through validation that this option should not be available for a specific course. The placement year must be completed satisfactorily but is not formally assessed and does not attract credit, although it will be mentioned on the graduation certificate and student transcript.

**49**        Courses may also offer shorter periods of placement activity as part of a taught unit. Some courses may include an accredited placement unit as part of the curriculum design. On other courses, a student may undertake a period of placement learning as part of a Learning Agreement. All work placement activities must be approved by the Course Leader as providing relevant knowledge or experience to support the student's overall learning on the course and subsequent employment upon graduation.

**50**        The normal expectation is that any shorter periods of work experience activity should take place within the scheduled weeks of study (term-time), except where explicitly approved by LTQ. LTQ may agree that placement activity can be undertaken during vacation periods where necessary, but the total study time should be no more than the standard agreed number of teaching weeks. Periods of work placement activity must be arranged in accordance with the Work Placement and Release Policy.

**51**        The University may offer a reading week for Higher Education students, but this will not count as one of the agreed weeks of study. Individual courses may include a teaching-free week as part of the agreed weeks of study where this is appropriate.

## 6. Curriculum design and content

**52**        Curriculum content is determined by the course proposer and developer within the parameters set out by LTQ, the LTAF and subject to approval from the validation panel. The content for any named award will be such that graduates will develop comprehensive, practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of their discipline, informed by current debates within that discipline, with the ability to position their work within relevant professional and graduate level work-related contexts.

**53**        The choice and design of content, and the associated assessment, will be informed by the need to ensure that all students are required to deploy the core techniques of analysis and enquiry within their discipline.

**54**        Courses are encouraged to deploy a variety of delivery methods, as appropriate to the course content and the anticipated learning. A taxonomy of delivery methods is provided in Section 3 of the LTAF.

**55**    While decisions about curriculum design and content are the responsibility of the academic course team, subject to precept 52 above, LTQ has agreed the following specific requirements for all awards:

i) All undergraduate courses include a major project component during the final level of study, which enables students to complete a significant body of work. This major project must comprise a minimum of 40 credits.

ii) All undergraduate students will normally be expected to produce a piece of academic writing of at least 5,000 words as part of their assessed work in the final year of study. This may be a traditional academic essay, but could also be a fully referenced research proposal, industry report or similar.

iii) For all postgraduate awards, the final phase of study will typically comprise a 60-credit project unit which enables students to demonstrate the scope and depth of learning required of an award at this level. No Master's award will be approved which does not include a major project of at least 40 credits.

These elements may not be replaced by a period of work experience, RPL or any other activity. However, precepts 73 and 74 on alternative forms of assessment continue to apply.

**56**    All courses provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. Critical reflection and self-evaluation will often form part of one component of assessment, especially in self-directed project units working to a Learning Agreement.

**57**    All courses may include a period of work placement (up to a maximum of one year). All Foundation Degree courses will include a period of work placement, as required by the QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement.

**58**    In addition, courses are designed to deliver the core graduate attributes of creativity, excellence, relevance and impact. Typical outcomes associated with these attributes are included in Part 3 of the LTAF.

**59**    Many of these core graduate attributes are not assessed independently but are behaviours and competences that are required to fulfil course outcomes. For example, organisation and time management skills might be tested through the overall success of a student in planning and delivering a major project. Other attributes might be assessed as a specific unit learning outcome, or through the totality of the student experience on the course.

**60**    There is no common shape to the delivery of these skills across AUB awards. However, there is an expectation that all students at Level 4 will be introduced to academic conventions and good academic practice (such as the avoidance of plagiarism); information and digital literacy; and general skills which facilitate academic study within higher education.

## 7. Assessment and feedback

**61**      Assessment is an integral part of learning. All assessment tasks are designed to support the learning process, embedding knowledge and skills, and to prepare students for success in future (both academically and professionally).

**62**      The specified assessment components enable students to demonstrate their achievement of the Learning Outcomes for each unit. The method of assessment must be relevant to the Learning Outcomes and enables a reliable and accurate evaluation of student achievement of those outcomes.

**63**      In addition, assessment supports students in demonstrating their achievement of the knowledge, skills and aptitudes they will need in their future academic and professional life. This includes the graduate outcomes set out in the University's Graduate Futures Framework.

**64**      The process of assessment is designed to enable students to apply their learning in diverse contexts, to reflect on their practice, and to develop their unique professional identity.

**65**      Each assessment method used by the course is explained to students so that expectations are clear. A taxonomy of assessment methods is provided in Section 3 of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework.

**66**      It must be made clear to students what they are expected to achieve. Where students are required to complete a Learning Agreement (see precept 41 above), this is discussed in detail before approval, with a clear statement of expectations and how each learning outcome will be demonstrated. If students are required to work as part of a group to complete a task, it is clear to everyone how their contribution will be judged.

**67**      Assessment tasks are designed to promote academic integrity and ethical behaviour. While the risk of academic misconduct cannot be eliminated, tasks are designed which minimise this risk and encourage student engagement. The design of both Learning Outcomes and assessment tasks enable students to evidence their own achievement.

**68**      The volume of assessment must be proportionate to the size of the unit. The validation process will ensure that all assessment components make a valid contribution to the demonstration of Learning Outcomes, and do not place an unreasonable burden on the student. Where two or more summative assessment components are used, a percentage weighting must be given to each. All assessment components should be explicitly defined in a written brief, except where a learning agreement is developed to define individual study within the parameters of a unit.

**69**          If formative assessment tasks are introduced (ie tasks which are primarily diagnostic and do not contribute to the overall mark for the unit), they must be clearly listed, and the contribution to the student learning experience must be explicit.

**70**          Any grouping of assessable activities into one "portfolio" assessment component must specifically identify the required elements and should reflect an appropriate level of complexity and scale commensurate with the credit weighting of the unit. A maximum number of pieces to be submitted should be identified within the unit descriptor, with a minimum also given where this is essential to demonstrate breadth as well as depth of learning. The overall assessment component must be a coherent, integrated submission, and the portfolio must respond to one brief, even where this may have more than one required element.

**71**          Word counts for written assessments (essays, reports and analysis) will typically be as follows:

L4 2,500 (20 credits); 5,000 (40 credits)
L5 3,500 (20 credits); 6,000-7,500 (40 credits)
L6 5,000 (20 credits); 8,000-10,000 (40 credits)
L7 5,000 (20 credits); 8,000-10,000 (40 credits); 9,000-11,000 (60 credits)
Reflective commentary: 1,000

If a written piece forms only part of the assessment, the expected wordcount should be proportionate: hence if a written piece comprises 50% of the assessment, the wordcount should be 50% of the expected volume where it is the sole piece of assessment.

All word counts should be considered as a norm, with a margin of +/- 10%

**72**          All assessment is subject to moderation under the terms of the AUB Verification Policy.

**73**          Wherever possible, assessment methods should be flexible to encourage achievement by students with a variety of strengths and learning styles. This may include alternative forms of submission within one unit, each meeting the specified Learning Outcomes, or may be delivered through the range of methods used across units. The full diet of assessment enables students to evidence their intellectual, practical and transferable skills, and prepares them for further study or professional progression.

**74**          All forms of submission may be replaced by a suitable alternative form, where it can be demonstrated that this also meets the stated Learning Outcomes and where the student learning experience, and assessment, is equivalent. The Course Leader is responsible for ensuring equivalence, in consultation with the Chair of the Examination Board.

**75**      The assessment matrix indicates how a student's work will be judged in relation to the Learning Outcomes. There should also be a clear indication of the level required to pass and the requirements to pass at each grade of assessment.

**76**      Students are assessed on how well they have met the Learning Outcomes of a unit, and therefore, the assessment matrix must be designed to assess these and to what level of success the student has achieved them.

**77**      All AUB course units will be assessed using an assessment matrix specifically designed to assess the Learning Outcomes of individual units. This ensures that students have the greatest level of clarity possible when receiving feedback and grades for units.

**78**      AUB strongly values the process of providing personalised feedback to all students, therefore the use of an assessment matrix does not negate the requirement to provide individual written feedback to students.

**79**      Feedback and feedforward can be provided to students via formal and informal methods. It could be delivered in a face-to-face setting on campus, or could be in writing, or in some cases, in video or audio format. Conversations that take place during tutorials, crits and studio practice sessions could also be considered as formative feedback. More detailed guidance about feedback is provided in Section 3 of the LTAF, including indicative wordcounts for summative feedback.

**80**      Feedback should be constructive and contribute to the student's learning and development. Summative feedback will reference performance against the Learning Outcomes and substantiate the mark awarded. Feedback will normally be returned to students within four working weeks of the submission date.

## 8. Recording progress

**81**     Students are entitled to regular information about their progress throughout the course. Each student is entitled to a minimum of one academic guidance tutorial in each taught term. This forms part of the formal taught contact time for the relevant unit of study.

**82**     Each course is allocated to a Subject Examination Board which ratifies the results of units owned by all relevant courses (undergraduate or postgraduate), following internal and external verification as appropriate. The terms of reference and constitution of the Subject Examination Boards are detailed in the assessment regulations. Subject Examination Boards may, at their discretion, arrange for additional meetings during the year to consider the outcomes for part-time courses at points of progression between levels; or to consider the results of work submitted for reassessment.

**83**     The University's Progression and Awards Board will meet as required to reach decisions about progression and award for all students registered on AUB awards. The Progression and Awards Board ensures the consistent application of the University's assessment regulations across all awards. Where relevant, it will also consider the recommendations of Subject Examination Boards on intermission and retrieval. The terms of reference and constitution of the Progression and Awards Board are detailed in the assessment regulations.

**84**     A transcript recording individual achievement will be made available by Registry to the student at the end of each level of study. This will be a means by which students can monitor, build upon, and reflect on their personal development and career planning. The transcript conforms to the European Diploma Supplement Requirements.

## 9. Managing delivery

**85**      Whilst units have a volume defined by the time required to achieve their stated Learning Outcomes, they have no intrinsic 'shape'. The pattern of study is specified only by points at which teaching is delivered and periods when access to facilities occur within the overall duration of the unit. The use of independent study time, which tends to increase throughout the course, is flexible (when not strictly related to the provision of technical resources).

**86**      Academic courses may be constructed as a series of intensive study blocks, a group of longer concurrent units, or a combination of both.

**87**      Graduating students are requested to remain in attendance until the meeting of the relevant Examination Board so that they can meet the external examiner if requested, but this is not a formal requirement.

**88**      The academic calendar for each academic year will specify the deadline for all work to have been submitted for assessment, and a further deadline for marks to be notified to Registry. The results of earlier units should be notified on their completion. Students will be informed of the latest possible date to receive written feedback and grades for their work, this will be published within their project briefs and communicated in the appropriate place on the Canvas VLE.

## 10. Quality assurance and enhancement

**89**      Academic Board will establish and may amend from time to time the academic structures required to underpin the University Regulatory Framework. Operational responsibility for the Framework is devolved to Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQ).

**90**      LTQ has delegated responsibility, on behalf of Academic Board, for the arrangements for the quality assurance and enhancement of the University's academic provision.

**91**      Processes for quality assurance and enhancement are themselves subject to regular review by the Committee and are detailed in the HE Quality Assurance Handbook, which is published annually and available on the Intranet.
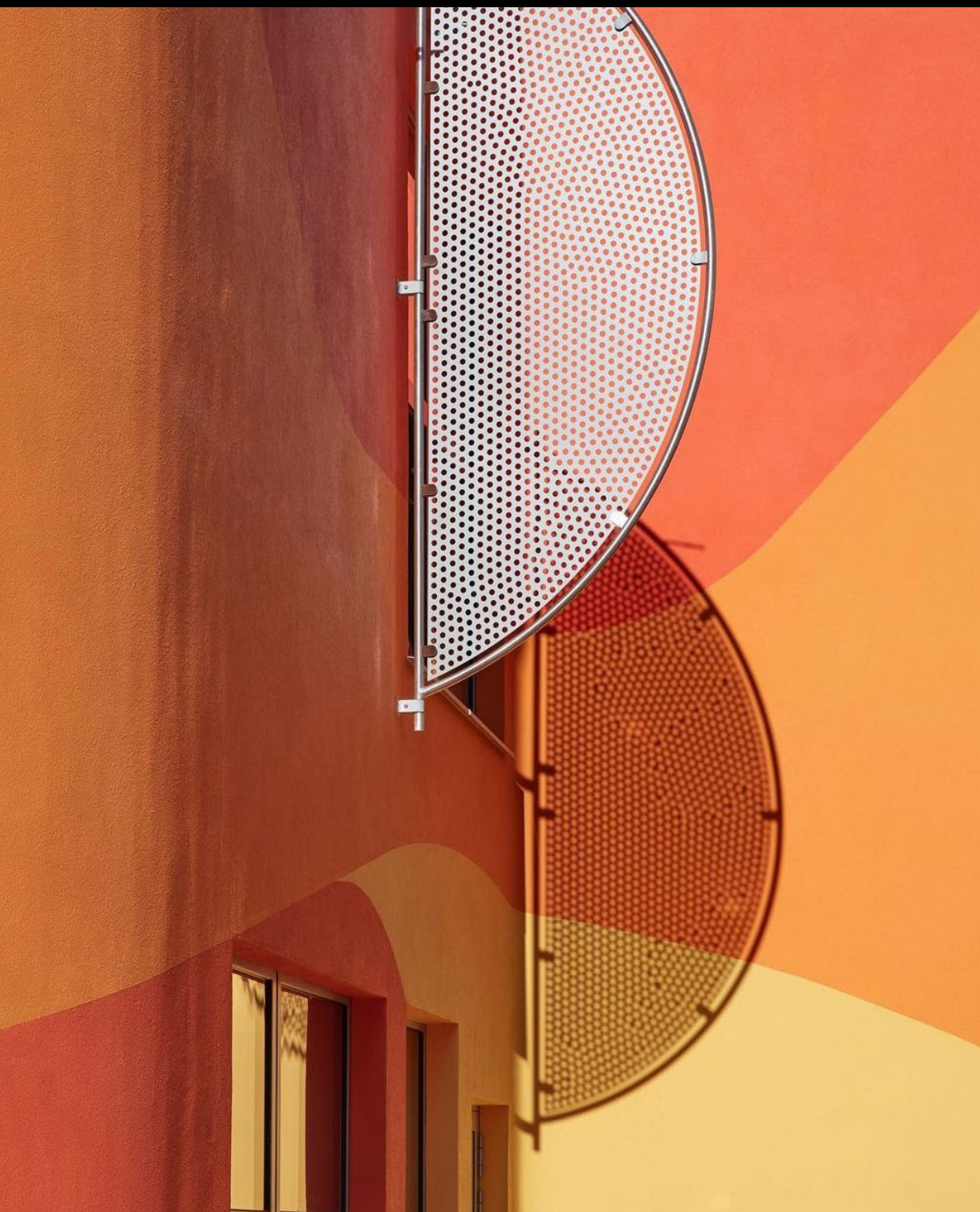
# Appendix A: Awards Available

The following awards are available at undergraduate
and postgraduate taught level (Levels 4-7)

(In each case the italics show where the course title is included; this is given in plain type
on all certificates and associated documentation)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Master of Architecture | MArch Architecture | Level 7 |
| Master of Fine Art | MFA *Subject* | Level 7 |
| Master of Arts<br>Master of Science | MA *Subject*<br>MSc *Subject* | Level 7 |
| Master of Arts with specialism<br>Master of Science with specialism | MA Subject *(Specialism)*<br>MSc Subject *(Specialism)* | Level 7 |
| Master of Research | MRes | Level 7 |
| Postgraduate Diploma | PGDip *Subject* | Level 7 |
| Postgraduate Certificate | PGCert *Subject* | Level 7 |
| Integrated Master's | MArt *Subject* | Level 7 |
| Honours Degree | BA (Hons) *Subject*<br>BSc (Hons) *Subject* | Level 6 |
| Honours Degree with specialism | BA (Hons) Subject *(Specialism)*<br>BSc (Hons) Subject *(Specialism)* | Level 6 |
| Degree (without Honours) | BA *Subject*<br>BSc *Subject* | Level 6 |
| Foundation Degree | FdA *Subject* | Level 5 |
| Diploma of Higher Education | DipHE *Subject* | Level 5 |
| Certificate of Higher Education | CertHE *Subject* | Level 4 |

The following credit requirements apply:

For the award of a Master of Architecture (MArch), a minimum of 240 credits must be
gained, of which a minimum of 180 credits must be at Level 7. An MA will be awarded to any
student undertaking an award leading to 240 credits, who leaves their course of study having
successfully completed 180 credits.

For the award of a Master of Fine Art (MFA), a minimum of 240 credits must be gained, of which a minimum of 180 credits must be at Level 7. An MA will be awarded to any student undertaking an award leading to 240 credits, who leaves their course of study having successfully completed 180 credits.

For a Master's Degree, a minimum of 180 credits must be gained, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 7.

For a Postgraduate Diploma, a minimum of 120 credits must be gained at Level 7. A PGDip will be awarded to any student who leaves their course of study having successfully completed 120 credits at Level 7. Any credit undertaken at Level 6, as part of an agreed postgraduate taught programme, cannot contribute to the credit required for a PGDip.

For a Postgraduate Certificate, a minimum of 60 credits must be gained at Level 7. A PGCert will be awarded to any student who leaves their course of study having successfully completed 60 credits at Level 7. Any credit undertaken at Level 6, as part of an agreed postgraduate taught programme, cannot contribute to the credit required for a PGCert.

For an Integrated Master's award, a minimum of 480 credits must be gained of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 7; a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 6; and a minimum of 240 credits must be at Level 5 or above.

For an Honours Degree, a minimum of 360 credits must be gained of which a minimum of 240 credits must be at Level 5 or above. Of these credits, a minimum of 120 must be at Level 6.

For students who articulate from a Foundation Degree to an Honours Degree, a minimum of 120 credits at Level 6 must be gained to achieve the Honours Degree.

For a Degree without Honours, a minimum of 300 credits must be achieved, of which a minimum of 60 credits must be at Level 6, and a minimum of 180 credits must be at Level 5 or above.

For a Foundation Degree, a minimum of 240 credits must be gained, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 5.

For a Diploma of Higher Education, a minimum of 240 credits must be gained, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 5.

For a Certificate of Higher Education, a minimum of 120 credits must be gained.

# AUB Roadmap and Guidance

03

This section sets out detailed guidance and good practice for the design and delivery of courses, and for assessment and feedback. It applies to both online and in-person activity. AUB has published a separate Digital Learning Framework which provides more detailed guidance about developing online learning and assessment.

The Roadmap and Guidance applies to all AUB taught courses at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level (Levels 4-7). It provides an ongoing source of good practice and should be used by academics, course developers and course teams approaching periodic review. This section of the LTAF will be updated regularly so that it remains current and responds to developments introduced by the portfolio plan and new curriculum developments.

# Constructing courses

## Course Overview

The best way to construct a course is to start with one or two sentences which summarise the "tagline" for the course – what's it about, why would someone take it? This tagline will be based on the working course title which was used for outline approval (Stages 1 and 2); the title can always be amended through the development process so concentrate on what you consider to be the fundamentals of the course.

## Course Outcomes

From the tagline, the course outcomes should be identified, probably no more than 6-8.

Learning Outcomes, whether at course or unit level, are an expression of the knowledge, skills and abilities a student should possess and be able to demonstrate by the end of the course or unit.

For Honours degree courses, these should be aligned to the core graduate outcomes for all Level 6 awards in the UK, expressed at AUB as:

> **All graduates will be able to evidence comprehensive, practical and theoretical knowledge and understanding of their discipline within relevant contexts. This core knowledge will be informed by current debates within the discipline, and all graduates will demonstrate their understanding of these debates and their implications and will be able to deploy the core techniques of analysis and enquiry within this discipline.**

For Master's degree courses, the Learning Outcomes should be aligned to the Master's degree qualification descriptor, which must be met in full for a student to be awarded a Master's degree.

Course outcome could start with: "by the end of this course, a graduate will know / be able to..."

It is also recommended to refer to the generic Level 6 outcomes derived from the AUB Graduate Futures Framework, which are mapped against the national expectations developed by QAA in partnership with the sector and adopted by OfS. This will ensure that course outcomes are at the right level and meet national expectations.

## Level Outcomes

Once course outcomes have been defined, the next step would be to reflect and consider how these will be learned: not how they will be taught, but what a student will need to do to master those course outcomes and to be able to demonstrate them reliably.

This should help with the development of outcomes for Level 6. It will then be necessary to consider how to bring students from Level 4 to the expected achievement at Level 6. What should they be demonstrating by the end of Level 4, and by the end of Level 5? Academic judgement should be used to define, and design, the learning journey.

It is important to remember that learning is not linear or atomised; students may develop an understanding of a particular concept or technique across several units or might find that something suddenly becomes clear later in the learning journey. Reinforcement of learning in subsequent units, even indirectly, is a valuable part of curriculum design. Equally, not all outcomes may be directly assessed; for example, excellent organisation and time management will be required to resolve any major project of 40 credits or more; a student who manages their time well is likely to produce a better and more complete response to a brief than a student who manages their time badly.

The concept of the 'learning journey' may not be familiar, but recently researchers have started to refer to this as 'storyboarding' the educational experience. They recommend using a blank wall with a lot of post-it notes, or an online collaborative platform. The learning journey is simply a way of setting out how the learning experience will unfold across one, two or three years, with key points marked out. Once the likely knowledge and skills at admission are considered, and the endpoint is clear, there are any number of ways to bring the student from 'point A' to 'point B'; and the way identified is the student learning journey. On each course, a student works through a thoughtfully structured unit or units, and then onto the next unit, taking with them the knowledge, skills and abilities they have developed. As units are self-contained blocks of learning, it is possible to perform well in later units even if some earlier units have not been passed, but those earlier units should help to prepare them for what comes next.

## Constructing Units

Once learning design and learning journey has been determined, the Learning Outcomes for individual units can be drafted, with relevant expectations at each level and building progressively. It is important to start by thinking about the student academic experience as a whole, especially if units are going to run sequentially, one in each term, because each new unit will be starting from the point the previous unit finished.

In a sense, even though they are written in a student-centred way, the aims of the unit are for the staff: what is it that the course team want to achieve through this unit? The Learning Outcomes are about what the student is expected to be able to do, and demonstrate, by the end of the unit (and, therefore, set out the student's starting point for the next unit). It may be easiest to write the unit description after you have drafted the aims and Learning Outcomes, but these parts need to be consistent and mutually reinforcing: together, they explain the purpose of the unit within the course.

In identifying teaching content and relevant supporting materials (resources or reference lists), it is important to consider how units might work together – especially if they are running concurrently. The outline syllabus is indicative; it is not expected to give a week-by-week guide, and it may be that additional material is covered especially if it is particularly topical, but it must include any areas on which a student will be assessed. As an example, if students are required to undertake collaborative work for assessment, the syllabus should include an induction to group working.

When considering learning and teaching methods, it is essential to start from learning: what is the student expected to learn and to demonstrate, and what is the best way of enabling them to achieve this? For example, the provision of some asynchronous materials could be an important part of a student's journey, as it gives them the chance to take responsibility for their learning and to go back over materials later if they need to. The unit descriptor will require a breakdown of the time to be dedicated to different types of delivery, and to independent study, for each unit.

It is important to ensure that sufficient account has been taken, throughout all teaching and learning practices, of core AUB values and principles (outlined in LTAF Section 1). This includes making sure that core expectations are built into Learning Outcomes, to be sure that all students have taken account of them. AUB taught units will normally have 4 Learning Outcomes at Levels 4 and 5; and 4-6 at Levels 6 and 7.

### Writing a Unit Descriptor

Unit descriptors might have many different audiences, as the same document can be used for various purposes. However, the primary audience is the student: the unit descriptor explains what the unit is about, how it will be taught, what a student is expected to be able to do at its conclusion, and how this will be assessed. It is the summary of the intentions, expectations and taught content for the unit and together, the unit descriptors provide a clear view of the curriculum journey a student will travel while studying a course.

All taught content, Learning Outcomes and taught content should be led by the unit descriptor which acts as a 'master' document for how all units within a course should be delivered.

### Examples of Unit Learning Outcomes

It is not intended that these examples of Learning Outcomes will be used within any course or unit design; they are provided for illustrative purposes and to give guidance on the appropriateness of level and language.

### Level 4

— Apply critical thinking skills to analyse and evaluate design concepts and their effectiveness in different contexts.

— Employ effective collaboration methods with appropriate internal and external partners and stakeholders.

— Analyse the outcomes/impacts of a project.

### Level 5

— Produce an exhibition layout and design concept proposition that clearly communicates the audience experience.

— Communicate clearly brand values and how they relate to the intended target market.

— Formulate a comprehensive design brief, demonstrating an understanding of key components required for a design project.

### Level 6

— Apply independent judgement in defining and researching a relevant topic in the field of the creative and cultural industries.

— Build a solid evidence base by using appropriate primary and secondary research methodologies.

— Develop a plan to deliver an innovative product, concept, event, or service which is realistic, viable and realisable.

### Level 7

— Identify the relevant techniques, skills and mediums required of a professional creative practitioner.

— Publish/produce a confident, coherent finished outcome that communicates a message and considers the end user context.

— Research a target audience in relation to a political or cultural message.

# Delivery

## Taught Delivery Approach

The taught delivery approaches at AUB are both teacher-centred and student-centred.

These two approaches impact the student learning experience, as well as their ability to understand new concepts and take in new knowledge.

Teacher centred learning involves the delivery or presentation of information content from the academic to the student.

Student centred learning involves the active participation of the student under the supervision of the academic or technical staff.

Students are also encouraged and expected to adopt independent learning capabilities to the appropriate level of HE studies.

## Taxonomy of Taught Delivery Types

The following activities are considered formal contact time.

| Taught Delivery Type | Description |
| --- | --- |
| **Lecture**<br>*(All students studying a unit)* | Academic member of staff, or guest speaker, delivers information via a presentation to a cohort. |
| **Briefing**<br>*(All students studying a unit)* | Academic member of staff (preferably the unit leader) delivers unit introduction information via a presentation to a cohort. Would usually include as a minimum, but is not limited to:<br><br>— unit briefing (introduction or other)<br><br>— unit assessment criteria<br><br>— unit schedule / scheme of work<br><br>— assessment requirements and submission deadlines<br><br>— assessment feedback deadlines<br><br>— assessed presentation dates |
| **Induction**<br>*(group size will vary)* | An induction into resource, specialist equipment or processes, specialist software induction. |
| **Seminar Activity**<br>*(Indicative group size of 20)* | A group session that would usually relate to a lecture topic or subject related topic aligned to the Learning Outcomes and assessment requirements of the unit.<br><br>— Seminar (group discussion of a topic)<br><br>— Critique (peer and/or staff feedback on work in progress)<br><br>— Peer Review (students discuss or feedback on each other's work) |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Assessment Presentations**<br>*(Students involved in the presentations)* | Students in a group or individually present their work to an audience or panel for assessment.<br><br>— formative<br><br>— assessed |
| **Tutorials**<br>*(individual)* | Engagement of staff with students individually to discuss their work or progress with learning or achievement of assessment tasks.<br><br>— progress tutorial (scheduled)<br><br>— progress tutorial (sign-up) |
| **Tutorials**<br>*(group)* | Engagement of staff with students in a group to discuss their work or progress with learning or achievement of assessment tasks.<br><br>— progress tutorial (scheduled)<br><br>— progress tutorial (sign-up) |
| **Workshop**<br>*(Indicative group size of 20, apart from if a space does not allow this number)* | Interactive learning session that might consist of, but is not limited to:<br><br>— drawing (open)<br><br>— life drawing / painting / making<br><br>— digital / practical induction<br><br>— digital / practical training<br><br>— analogue induction<br><br>— mock interviews |
| **Screening**<br>*(Group size will vary)* | Showing of film(s) for education purposes. Students must be provided with information regarding why they are watching the film(s) and what the associated tasks, activities or outcomes are following the screening. |
| **Educational Visit**<br>(Group size will vary) | A supervised trip organised for students off campus to a destination, organisation or business relevant to their learning for the unit. |
| **Studio Practice**<br>(Group size will vary) | Students will be working in a space with guided learning, led by staff. Students are expected to be in the studio as part of unit delivery contact time. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Open Studio with Support** (Group size will vary) | Opportunity for students to use studio space in their own time with academic or technician demonstrator support available. These sessions count as formal taught contact time. |

Indicative group sizes are provided for some delivery types. There will be occasions when smaller numbers are required (based on the size of the cohort, or the size of the space / health and safety restrictions). Similarly, there may be occasions where much larger groups sizes are acceptable, especially where the activity takes place online or using digital tools. Staff are expected to exercise their judgement in determining the most appropriate group size (using these indicative figures as a guide) while prioritising the student learning experience.

The following activities are also typical on many courses, but do NOT constitute formal contact hours:

| | |
|---|---|
| Open Studio with Supervisory Presence | Opportunity for students to use studio space in their own time. Supervisory support is provided due to health and safety considerations. |
| Open Studio without Support | Opportunity for students to use studio space in their own time. No staff support available. |

## Contact Hours

AUB considers contact hours to be the hours that students spend in contact with teaching staff for the purposes of learning, teaching, and assessment; undertaken online or in person. Contact hours are the taught contact hours to which each student has a right and include all taught sessions as described within the taxonomy of taught delivery types; it also includes sessions delivered by other staff (eg; Library staff, careers staff etc).

In Section 2 of the LTAF (Precept 37), AUB sets typical expectations for the number of taught contact hours that each student will receive per unit.

These are repeated below:

| Level | 20 credits | 40 credits | 60 credits | Total contact for the level |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 50 hrs | 100 hrs | - | 300 hrs |
| 5 | 50 hrs | 100 hrs | - | 300 hrs |
| 6 | 40 hrs | 70 hrs | 90 hrs | 200-210 hrs |
| 7 | 20 hrs | 40 hrs | 60 hrs | 180 hrs |

The following are provided as examples of how this works in practice:

— A student who is on an educational visit for 8 hours is receiving 8 hours of contact.

— Sessions such as sign-up tutorials, where a student has a right to a tutorial, are contact hours (even if some students choose not to take up this option). However, contact hours relate only to the time received by each individual student: if sign-up tutorials are scheduled for six hours, with each tutorial lasting 20 minutes, the **student contact time is 20 minutes**.

Whether the student is in a group or individual session, the actual length of the tutorial iswhat is regarded as contact time for the individual student.

Taught contact hours will vary per week/per term in accordance with the subject type, and/or unit content. For example, in a 40-credit unit at Level 4, the expectation is that each student will receive 100 contact hours, which equates to an average of ten hours of contact time per week throughout the term. However, it may be that there are more contact hours towards the beginning of a unit, with this reducing closer to the assessment point as students spend more time on independent learning.

There might be variation of contact hours per unit within a level of study, such that contact is lower in one unit but correspondingly higher in another. However, it is expected that student contact hours should match the expected total for the level.

Some assessment, such as assessed presentations, will constitute contact hours. Feedback tutorials also form part of student contact hours.

# Assessment

## Types of Assessment

Assessment at AUB consists of two types:

Formative Assessment:

— used during the learning process to assess student progress and understanding

— provides feedback on learning-in-process, allowing for development and enhanced progress

— feedback would usually be dialogue-based and ungraded, written, recorded or overall group feedback might also be provided

— feedback should be aligned to unit Learning Outcomes.

Summative Assessment:

— used at the end of the learning process to assess student outcomes

— evaluates student learning against unit Learning Outcomes

— graded using an assessment criterion aligned to the unit Learning Outcomes (provided to students during the introduction to the unit).

## Taxonomy of Assessment Methods

| Assessment Method | Description |
| --- | --- |
| **Essay** | An academic written piece of work (may also contain visuals) that includes but may not always be limited to: <br><br> — responds to a question or approaches a subject from an informed individual perspective <br><br> — is based on academic research <br><br> — presents arguments, showing subject and critical awareness <br><br> — demonstrates academic methodology, utilising aims, objectives and academic referencing in line with AUB requirements. <br><br> Word counts must be provided via the unit brief for all essays, whether these are to be assessed formatively or summatively. Word count guidance is provided in Precept 37 of LTAF Section 2. |
| **Industry report** | An industry report provides an overview of a specific industry. Often including, but not limited to: <br><br> — industry trends and outlooks <br><br> — industry performance, and forecasts <br><br> — market intelligence (business and consumer) <br><br> — primary and / or secondary research <br><br> — focus on relevant major industries (country specific or global) <br><br> Word counts must be provided via the unit brief for all industry reports, whether these are to be assessed formatively or summatively. Word count guidance is provided in Precept 37 of LTAF Section 2. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Presentation / Group Presentation / Pitch** | A presentation would require a student, or a group of students, to formally present information to an audience or panel; this could be in person or via a video recording. The presentation or pitch would usually present a new product, idea, business, or piece of work.<br><br>The length of time required for the presentation must be provided for all types of presentation whether individual or group, in person or recorded, via the unit brief. The length of time should proportionate to the level of study and credit weighting of the assessment element. |
| **Portfolio of Work / E-Portfolio of Work** | — A portfolio provides a compilation of academic, professional, developmental, or creative materials that demonstrate a students' skills, creativity, knowledge, and experience in response to a brief.<br><br>— The portfolio could be hard copy or digital. (Ensure student inclusivity is considered.)<br><br>— The amount of work required for the portfolio must be specified via the unit brief, for example: 10 pages of research / 10 pages of development work / 10 pages of process work and/or 5 pages of final creative work. |
| **Research File** | A research file would contain work that demonstrates diligent, focused and considered research. This might include, but is not limited to:<br><br>— evidence of visual or written inquiry or examination of a subject, artist, designer, creative approach, era, artistic style, or industry<br><br>— investigation or experimentation intended to assist with the discovery and interpretation of facts<br><br>— creative or written exploration of theory or practice<br><br>— practical investigation of new or revised theory or practice<br><br>— the collecting of a range of information about a particular subject (appropriate to the level and area of study)<br><br>— audience, industry, business, creative or design investigations and visual reference points<br><br>The amount of work required for the research file must be specified. The amount of written or creative work should be clearly communicated via the unit brief. |

**Creative Artefact**

A creative artefact provides the opportunity for some level of interpretation.

This assessment method allows for different options for creative assessed outcomes to be implemented for unit briefs when working on live projects, competitions and industry opportunities as they arise, (provided they afford students the opportunity to fulfil the unit Learning Outcomes.)

A creative artefact may form part of a Portfolio / E-Portfolio of work and must be aligned with the Learning Outcomes for the unit. The requirements for assessment must also be clear within the assessment matrix provided during the unit introduction briefing and via the unit brief.

A clear description of the expected creative artefact must be provided via the unit brief to ensure what is required is understood and may also include text submissions such as prose or poetry.

A clear description of the expected creative artefact must be provided via the unit brief along with expected amount of work required, for example, 6 x portrait photographs.

**Written Artefact**

A written artefact provides the opportunity for some level of interpretation.

This assessment method allows for different options for written assessed outcomes to be implemented for unit briefs when working on live projects, competitions and industry opportunities as they arise, (provided they afford students the opportunity to fulfil the unit Learning Outcomes).

A written artefact may form part of a Portfolio / E-Portfolio of work and must be aligned with the Learning Outcomes for the unit. The requirements for assessment must also be clear within the assessment matrix provided during the unit introduction/briefing and via the unit brief.

A clear description of the expected written artefact must be provided via the unit brief along with expected word counts. Word count guidance is provided in Precept 37 of LTAF Section 2.

**Process Work**

Process work provides the documentation of a series of development work and / or steps that creatives, artists and designers go through to generate ideas and outcomes. The type of work that would be expected within process work might include, but not be limited to:

— project planning

— developmental research

— developmental experimentation

— annotation of development work.

The amount of process work required must be specified via the unit brief. This could be page counts or word counts depending on the type of work.

**Case Study**

A case study would be used to explore an identified problem or issue within a real-world context. This would usually involve the student undertaking a broad range of reading or research to analyse what is happening within the specific case being investigated.

Students might be required to tackle a case study assessment task in different ways, for example:

— a case study would be provided for students to analyse

— case studies might be used as a method for researching a subject or issue.

The amount of work required for the case study (including word counts) must be specified via the unit brief.

**Business Plan**

A business plan provides an overview of the way in which a company is intended to operate. These would include but not be limited to:

— the main goals of the business are

— how much money it will need to achieve its' intended goals

— what activities will be performed by the business

— what investments will be required to achieve the business goals what marketing and communication activities would be deployed.

The amount and type of work required and the style of presentation for the business plan (including word counts) must be specified via the unit brief. Word count guidance is provided in Precept 37 of LTAF Section 2.

**Reflective Journal**

A reflective journal provides a personal record of a student's reflections on their learning experiences during a unit. Usually taking the form of a written document or blog, it is a space where students record and reflect upon their own work, progress and outcomes, providing personal responses to situations that have occurred during their study.

A reflective journal could also include visual or creative work and could also be in response to work experience or placement opportunities.

Word counts must be provided for all reflective journals, whether these are to be assessed formatively or summatively via the unit brief. Word count guidance is provided in Precept 37 of LTAF Section 2.

**Reflective Commentary**

A written reflective commentary provides an overview of a student's reflection upon their learning experience once they have reached the end of a project or work experience / placement. It will usually be written but could also include visual or creative work.

Word count guidance is provided in Precept 37 of LTAF Section 2.

**Sketchbook**

A sketchbook serves as a space for collecting research, ideas, and a record of work-in-progress. It might be utilised as an assessment tool to cultivate and refine ideas during a project. It also acts as a platform for students to summarise, annotate and evaluate their ideas and concepts.

The amount of work required for the sketchbook must be specified by page count. The amount of written, creative or research work should be clearly communicated via the unit brief.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Visual Report** | A visual report provides an overview of a specific subject, industry or project related issue, presented as a graphically designed creative outcome, often including, but not limited to: |
| | — industry trends and outlooks |
| | — design and creative directions |
| | — industry performance, and forecasts |
| | — market intelligence (business and consumer) |
| | — primary and / or secondary research |
| | — focus on relevant major industries (country specific or global). |
| | Word counts must be provided for all industry reports via the unit brief, whether these are to be assessed formatively or summatively. Word count guidance is provided in Precept 37 of LTAF Section 2. |
| **Performance** | Performance refers to a student's contribution to a live presentation of a play, dance or other entertainment. It must be clear to students via the unit brief how their individual performance is judged, and whether their mark will be individual or affected by the overall success of the group. |
| **Impact Assessment Report** | A report that presents data to assess the impact of a project on a community or situation, including but not limited to: |
| | — environmental |
| | — social |
| | — economic |
| | — competitor environment. |
| | Word counts must be provided for all industry reports via the unit brief, whether these are to be assessed formatively or summatively. Word count guidance is provided in Precept 37 of LTAF Section 2. |
| **Technical File** | A technical file would usually contain a selection of work that contribute to an outcome. A technical file might often include but be not limited to: |
| | — samples / prototypes |
| | — patterns / technical drawings |
| | — construction notes |
| | — materials. |
| | The type and amount of work required for the technical file must be specified, via the unit brief. |

## Using the AUB Assessment Matrix

AUB requires all taught units to utilise an assessment rubric, (referred to as an assessment matrix by AUB).

The assessment matrix is a type of scoring guide that assesses and articulates specific components and expectations for an assignment; the matrix can be used for all assignment types: eg, research papers, group projects, portfolios, and presentations.

The assessment matrix can also be considered as a tool that helps teaching staff to assess student work. The matrix should contain the unit Learning Outcomes, and qualitative grade descriptors that articulate the standards against which student work is assessed (please see page 13 for an illustrative example).

### Why use an assessment matrix?

Using an assessment matrix can aid the assessment process by allowing assessors to:

— assess assignments consistently from student-to-student

— save time when marking

— provide effective feedback and promote student learning reflection

— ensure marking decisions are transparent, equitable, valid and reliable

— clarify expectations and elements of assessment requirements for both students and teaching staff.

The matrix will help students to:

— understand the expectations and elements of assessment

— become more aware of their learning process and progress in alignment with the Learning Outcomes for the unit

— focus and direct student effort so that their work is aligned to the expectations within the matrix

— Improve work through timely and detailed feedback

— make explicit and thus transparent the criteria and standards that will be used to grade their assessment (this is aligned to a question in the National Students Survey)

— understand how marking is fair (this is aligned to a question in the National Students Survey).

### Engaging students with the assessment matrix

Activities that encourage students to actively engage with the assessment Learning Outcomes and standards throughout their course have been evidenced as helping student achievement, resulting in significant learning gains (Jones et al., 2017).

Student engagement with the assessment matrix helps students to understand more deeply the standards and criteria that will be used to assess their work but can also help them to develop their identities as independent learners.

There are several methods that could be used to engage students with the matrix and the standards that will be used to assess their work.

These activities might include:

— self and/or peer assessment formative activities where students review theirs/each other's work against the criteria before submission

— students working in group sessions during which they would mark and comment on other students work using the assessment matrix. Students could then explain and justify their marks and comments to the group. After each group has fed back, the lecturer then explains the rationale for the mark assigned to the exemplars and the strengths and areas of improvement/that could be approached differently regarding each exemplar.

Jones et al. (2017) argue that such activities that encourage student engagement with this type of activity using an assessment matrix can be particularly effective for student learning when introduced at an early stage of their education journey.

## Undergraduate Assessment Matrix Sample

| Undergraduate Assessment Matrix | Course: BA | (Hons) Garden Design | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Unit Title:** Design Principles | | | **Unit Credit:** 40 | | |

| **Unit Learning Outcomes** | **Level of achievement indicators** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0-38 | 42-48 | 52-58 | 62-68 | 72-78 | 82+ |
| **Apply critical thinking skills to analyse and evaluate design concepts and their effectiveness in different contexts.** | Lack of critical thinking, analysis or evaluation of design concepts in any contexts. | Adequate critical thinking, analysis and evaluation of design concepts within limited ranges of contexts. | Good level of critical thinking demonsrated along with some good attempts at analysis and evaluation of design concepts within a range of contexts. | Clearly articulated critical thinking. Good level of analysis and in-depth evaluation of design concepts within a range of contexts. The work demonstrates a strong understanding of the materials introduced in the unit. | Clearly articulated and well-developed critical thinking, with excellent indepth analysis. Well evidenced and considered evaluation of complex design concepts within a broad range of contexts. The work reaches beyond the materials introduced in the unit. | Clear and well-developed critical thinking, with outstanding in-depth analysis. Professional level of evaluation of complex design concepts within a broad range of contexts. The work reaches beyond the materials introduced in the unit and demonstrates industry level approach. |
| **Employ effective collaboration methods with appropriate internal and external partners and stakeholders.** | | | | | | |
| **Analyse the outcomes/impacts of a project.** | | | | | | |

**Feedback and Feedforward:** xmcndofnjdjd[p

# Assessment Feedback

Feedback is vital to enhance student learning and is a central part of the assessment process. AUB recognises the importance of parity and consistency across courses, units and levels of study to ensure that each student is given the same opportunity to engage with constructive, clear and fair feedback provided in a timely manner to be of most help to all students.

Feedback and feedforward will be provided to students in a variety of ways. Some of these are formal – through the communication of the final feedback and mark for a unit, via written comments (which could also be delivered using other formats such as video or audio). Others are less formal, especially in the case of formative tasks; conversations that take place during crits and studio practice sessions could also be considered as feedback on progress. Other feedback methods may be more structured, but still interactive: a progress tutorial, or a discussion of the final work.

## Providing High Quality Feedback

The following guidance relates primarily to summative assessment feedback; but the same principles often apply to formative assessment feedback.

Feedback and feedforward do two key things:

— justify the mark, explaining to a student where they have done well and what could have been done better (feedback)

— explain how the work be improved going forward (feedforward).

Good feedback is always clear, honest and fair. There should be consistency between the mark awarded and the comments provided, it should always be clear to students how the feedback provided is aligned explicitly against the unit Learning Outcomes.

Feedback should emphasise what a student has done well, providing motivation and encouragement; feedforward should serve to help students to reflect on their performance and consider how they could develop and/or improve, even the highest achievers are keen to know how they might continue to develop. Good quality feedback and feedforward allows students to understand feedback as a reflective process: a continual dialogue which enhances their learning.

Feedback and marks should always be provided to students within four working weeks of the unit assessment submission date, ideally sooner where possible.

The feedback date must be published via the unit brief to enable students to understand when feedback and marks can be expected.

### Justifying the mark

The Wiseflow system asks the assessor to report on indicative performance against each learning outcome, as well as an overall summative mark. This overall mark is not an arithmetic calculation – it is an academic judgement of how well the outcome was resolved and should be holistic. (For example, comparatively good or poor performance against one specific learning outcome could have a very major effect overall; or might be less significant.)

Feedback / feedforward comments should be clear in relation to whether the expected standards were met, and how the student's work achieves or falls short of these. It should be evident to the student, as the recipient of the feedback, why the mark awarded is not higher, and what would have been required to achieve a better mark.

**The university assessment matrix should be used for providing feedback to students, this should be written in alignment with the Learning Outcomes for the unit and provided to students as guidance during the unit introduction briefing at the start of term.**

### Explaining to a student how they can improve - feedforward

It is important to celebrate what a student has done well. It is rare that a serious attempt at an assignment does not include any successful elements, or at least some elements which are more successful than others. Highlighting these areas can promote confidence and self-belief, and validate the efforts demonstrated.

When identifying areas for improvement, good practice suggests that it is worth focusing on no more than three areas of the work. Even if it would be possible to identify a much longer list of weaknesses, referring to all of these is unlikely to be productive. Picking out three points which would make a real difference to the quality of the work, and are realistically achievable, will have a much greater impact.

Feedback comments need to be clear: readily understood by the student, with an obvious link to the work and the relevant learning outcome/s. It might be useful to structure feedback into discrete sections, for example:

**1.** refer back to the unit aims and Learning Outcomes (primarily justifying the mark)

**2.** commenting on the progress made and any particular achievements

**3.** looking ahead and identifying areas on which a student can improve or build if they wish to continue to develop their skills (feedforward).

When feedforward is provided successfully, it allows the student the opportunity to identify areas of their knowledge or skills upon which they need to concentrate; or to identify aspects of their learning behaviour which are not enabling them to perform to their full potential. This could be about how they organise their time, or the way in which they approach research.

These general points of advice may be useful:

— Feedback is not personal: it is about the work. It should be recognised that human beings tend to focus overly on the negative, and to see criticism as personal, especially for longer and more self-directed pieces of work. That immediately makes a receiver of feedback feel defensive, and less likely to engage with what is being said or written.

— Well-articulated, constructive feedback can help to bolster self-esteem and encourage a student to take responsibility for improving, which means that the language used to convey comments can make a significant difference in how feedback is received. Regular reference should be made to **the work** (eg "this work would have been better if", rather than "you would have done better if").

— Try to turn negative comments into positive feedforward advice. Instead of "you haven't referred to the most recent research", use a formulation like "this work would have been improved by referring to recent research, such as…".

It can also be useful to set expectations from the start of the course and/or unit and refer to this regularly via the assessment matrix and the unit brief, especially shortly before unit deadlines. For example, students could be reminded that:

— even work of the highest level is not usually perfect, and there will always be room for improvement

— the process of making and developing work has considerable learning value (it's not just about the outcome)

— assessment is part of the process, and a way of consolidating learning; in producing the output, whatever its form, a student will have learned more than they realise

— Feedback / feedforward – both the summative mark, and the comments – represents an opportunity to reflect, engage and improve; abilities are not fixed, and can be developed by focusing on the areas which have not yet been mastered.

## Collaborative / Group Work

AUB values collaboration as a key graduate attribute. Group and cross-disciplinary learning and teaching is highly beneficial and increases students' understanding of industry practices. By encouraging cross-course participation, peer learning, team working skills and group project management the enhancement of analytical and cognitive skills is significantly increased, thus increasing graduate employability.

Many courses at AUB include units within which the final assessment requirements include outcomes achieved through group or collaborative working. This may include a performance; a film or animation; an event; or any project where two or more students have worked together to produce the required assessment outcome.

Groups may be established through student choice, or through staff allocation. In all cases it is important to provide some induction to group working, and to support each group to have positive and constructive interactions. This includes being clear about each student's responsibility to participate, and to contribute effectively to the outcome; students can begin by taking on roles within the group or by creating team agreements and/or commitments that will define individual roles for the duration of the project.

Despite best endeavours, some groups can become dysfunctional or encounter issues with individual members. In these instances, the course team needs to be clear about what steps will be taken to enable the students to continue with their learning without being disadvantaged. Groups can also be hampered through extraneous circumstances (such as the prolonged absence of a group member through illness, intermission or even withdrawal); this may require a revision to the expected output, or it may be that the circumstances need to be considered when assessing the work. Group work assessment requirements should be designed in such a way that individual students are able to demonstrate their reflections on the group and their own individual contribution.

In the case of group work assessment, it is important to consider how failure could be retrieved, and especially the failure of one individual within a group where the remaining group members pass.

## Assessment of Collaborative or Group Work

There are many possible ways of assessing collaborative work. It is important to select the most appropriate approach in each case, and to be explicit to students about how they will be assessed via the unit brief. The fundamental underlying principle is that the marks awarded for the assessment should be allocated in a way that consistently rewards students for achieving the learning objectives.

**It is important to note that the assessment design and strategy for units that require formative or summative assessed group outcomes should be done at course development and writing stage. All assessment requirements communicated to students via unit briefs must be in line with the formal validated unit descriptor.**

Assessment methods may include:

— **Assessing the work against the Learning Outcomes, and awarding the same mark to all group members**

This is the simplest way of assessing the work. However, students can often think that this is unfair, as some group members may be perceived to have spent less time on the task or made a lesser contribution. It also implies that all group members have mastered and demonstrated the Learning Outcomes to an identical extent; there may be occasions where this judgement is valid, but often it will be difficult to determine.

— **Assessing the work against the Learning Outcomes, but adjusting the marks of individual group members**

The risk of a group member being perceived as 'freeloading' can be reduced by introducing an additional element to the assessment process whereby the marks for individual group members are adjusted according to set criteria. This could include peer review, where all group members are asked to evaluate the contribution made by others in their group against criteria established in advance by the Unit Leader. (This should only be included where students have previously had an induction into peer evaluation and have had the opportunity to undertake peer evaluation in a non-assessed setting.) Groups can also be asked to keep notes of meetings, or a log of actions, to support their decisions; or all members can be asked to keep a reflective journal alongside the main activity.

If this approach is used, it is not uncommon for the average mark of group members to be the mark awarded for the outcome.

— **Individual Learning Agreements**

There may be occasions where it is preferable for each student to prepare an individual Learning Agreement against which they will be assessed. This will be most effective for assessment components that require specific tasks and can be separately assessed. Clarity is required about how success in the task is determined: for example, is it possible that a student could successfully meet the terms of their Learning Agreement to a very high standard, but the final group output be poor?

— **Combination of methods**

In some instances, a combination of the above methods may be the most reliable approach to assessment. For example, the assessment could be designed to include two assessed elements, such that one mark might be awarded to all group members for the final work; and a second mark awarded to each individual for a reflective journal or Learning Agreement. These could be equally weighted (50:50), or one part could be weighted more heavily depending on the importance of each assessed element and the way that the assessment has been designed.

In all cases, it must be clear and obvious to students what they are expected to achieve, and how they will be assessed on the unit via the unit brief.

## Provision of Written Summative Assessment Feedback

It is important for all students at AUB to receive a reasonable level of feedback for work that they complete for assessment. The quantity of feedback provided should be proportionate to the work required for assessment and presented in an accessible format via the unit assessment matrix.

To ensure consistency, AUB sets indicative wordcount expectations for formal summative feedback. These wordcounts apply to units (not individual assessment components).

These are as follows:

| Unit Size | Unit Level | Written Feedback Word Count Expectation |
|---|---|---|
| 20 | 4 | 450 - 500 words |
| 40 | 4 | 600 - 700 words |
| 20 | 5 | 450 - 500 words |
| 40 | 5 | 600 - 700 words |
| 20 | 6 | 450 - 500 words |
| 40 | 6 | 600 - 700 words |
| 60 | 6 | 600 - 700 words |
| 60 | 7 | 600 - 700 words |

If there is a preference or requirement to provide formal feedback using video or audio clips, the following is an approximate guide:

| Unit Size | Unit Level | Expected Recorded Feedback Length |
|---|---|---|
| 20 | 4 | 2 ½ minutes |
| 40 | 4 | 4 minutes |
| 20 | 5 | 2 ½ minutes |
| 40 | 5 | 4 minutes |
| 20 | 6 | 2 ½ minutes |
| 40 | 6 | 4 minutes |
| 60 | 6 | 4 minutes |
| 60 | 7 | 4 minutes |

***NOTE:** If providing recorded feedback, a brief written justification of the mark, and the mark itself, MUST be provided using the Wiseflow system. This ensures accessibility for students, external examiners, and the University (for example, in the event of an appeal). The recorded feedback must also be available for verification or moderation if required.

## Presentation of Unit Briefs

AUB is focused on ensuring that students have all the information that they need to successfully complete their unit assessments. Students should be provided with a unit brief on the first day that teaching for a unit begin, unit teaching should always begins with a Unit introduction briefing during which students should be provided with a full overview of the Learning Outcomes and assessment outcome expectations. This should be accompanied by an introduction to the assessment matrix.

Minimum expectations of information to be communicated via the unit brief:

— start and end date of the unit teaching

— unit description

— assessment requirements - each assessment element should be explained in detail

— teaching schedule shown week by week

— assessment submission deadlines (date and time)

— method by which assessment outcomes should be submitted

— reading list

— assessment feedback dates / marks and feedback publication date

— unit assessment matrix.

Unit briefs should be placed on Canvas to provide continual access for all students.

Unit briefs should always be checked to ensure they are accessible for all learners.

**Date of LTAF publication November 2023.**

**References**

Jones, L., Allen, B., Dunn, P. and Brooker, L. (2017). Demystifying the rubric: a five-step pedagogy to improve student understanding and utilisation of marking criteria. Higher Education Research & Development, 36(1), 129-142. [online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/07294360.2016.1177000?needAccess=tr ue [Accessed 20 August 2018].

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