

**PORTFOLIO OVERSIGHT GROUP  
INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS GROUP**

**Delivery of Level 7 Provision by FE/HE Partner Colleges**

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**Context**

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7: Master's Degree, states:

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

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

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
  - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
  - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

**Policy**

The University will consider approving the delivery of Level 7 programmes in FE/HE Partner Colleges subject to satisfactory completion of a number of conditions:

- As part of the Portfolio Oversight Group/International and Regional Partnership Group initial approval processes, and the (Re)Validation and Approval to Deliver processes, consideration of the FE/HE Partner College's previous experience delivering provision at Level 7 will take place.
- As part of (Re)Validation and Approval to Deliver processes, examination of quality and standards in respect of assessment and teaching, together with evidence that staff teaching is appropriately informed by research for Level 7 study and will be supported by and contribute to the research environment of the University. There should be evidence of an ongoing and proactive research culture embedded within the programme and programme team to enable appropriate support for Level 7 students. This will inform the 'Approval to Deliver' decision. Where possible, approval panels should have the opportunity to discuss the student experience at the FE/HE College with current Level 7 students.
- As part of (Re)Validation and Approval to Deliver processes, the University will assess the appropriateness of staff and learning resources available for delivery at Level 7, including ensuring that staff are appropriately qualified for Level 7 delivery.
- The FE/HE Partner College and UoL School ensuring close and continuing contact between named staff at the College and named staff within the School. College staff should be invited to attend the University for staff development and liaison sessions on a regular basis.
- The FE/HE Partner College maintain, and keep the University informed of the appropriateness of staff and learning resources available for delivery at Level 7. Any change to this resource base must be notified to the University without delay.
- Level 7 provision at the FE/HE Partner College is subject to specific scrutiny as part of the Annual Programme Monitoring cycle, including Link Tutor reporting.
- Any decision to remove approval to deliver at Level 7 must take account of students already registered on the programme, who are entitled to see their studies through to completion as set out in the collaborative agreement covering the arrangement.