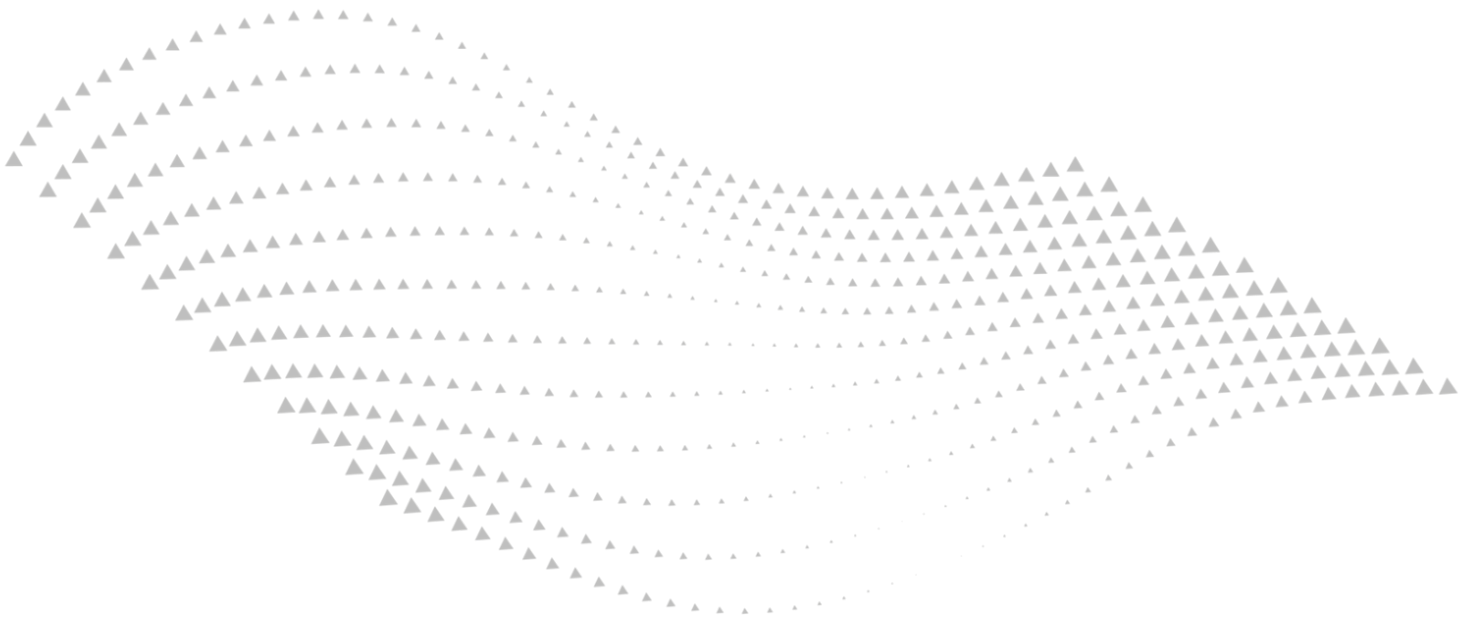


BIMM
UNIVERSITY

A university
for the creative
industries

Academic Framework



Last approved: September 2022

Approved by: Academic Board

Next review due: September 2026

1. Academic Framework

- 1.1 This Academic Framework establishes the criteria and rules for courses leading to a BIMM University award. It sets out the basic criteria for awards by establishing the parameters necessary to assure the quality and academic standing of BIMM University courses in accordance with the *Qualifications & Credit Framework in England, Wales & Northern Ireland* (Ofqual 2010), *Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in England, Northern Ireland & Wales* (2008), the *Higher Education Credit Framework for England: guidance on academic credit arrangements in Higher Education in England* (2008); and the *Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area - FQ-EHEA* (Bergen 2005).
- 1.2 Course-specific requirements may, following approval through the University's course approval process, be set for the award of named degrees, diplomas and certificates, and may be more stringent than those set out in this document.

2. Authority to Confer Awards

- 2.1 BIMM University derives its authority to confer awards from the provisions of the Higher Education & Research Act (2017), which amended the provisions of the Further & Higher Education Act (1992). BIMM University, acting through its Academic Board, has delegated to the Head of Institution (or designate) the authority to confer awards on persons recommended as eligible. Academic Board has provided for the establishment of these authorised committees to make recommendations for the conferment of awards:
 - Award Board.
 - Honorary Awards Committee.
- 2.2 Conferment of a BIMM University award will be by the Head of Institution or, through delegated authority, by a designated senior member of the Executive Management Group.
- 2.3 For all awards, conferment requires that the following conditions are satisfied:
 - The student was registered at the University at the time of their assessment for the award.
 - The student has completed the course of study approved as leading to the award being recommended.
 - The conferment has been recommended by the appropriate committee, acting under regulations approved by the University.
- 2.4 The conferment shall be that for which the student is registered, except in the case of non-completion. Normally, an exit award may be made if a student has fulfilled the requirements of that award and it is available on their chosen course of study.
- 2.5 The University has established an Honorary Awards Committee as a sub-committee of Academic Board to consider recommendations for the conferment of honorary awards on individuals and to make recommendations to Academic Board for the inclusion of new honorary awards. The criteria for approval and list of honorary awards available are detailed in the University's [Honorary Awards Scheme](#).
- 2.6 The Head of Institution (or designate), acting on the recommendation of the Award Board, may rescind an award. Any award may be rescinded if it is established that the authorised committee made its decision based on misleading or incorrect evidence or, in the case of honorary awards, if a person granted such an award engages in activity that is not in line with the good standing of the University. In the case of an academic award, it may be rescinded if it is established that unfair academic practice has taken place.

3. Approval of Courses

3.1 The University will consult widely before approving a new course. It will consider proposals in the context of existing University courses and their relationship to each other and to those of other bodies. Academic Board oversees the approval of all courses, through a process managed by the Higher Education Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Committee, which will consider courses based on:

- Position within the national qualification frameworks.
- The characteristics and level of the proposed course that would both distinguish it from existing courses and relate it to them.
- The suitability of existing awards for the proposed course(s) of study.
- The likely demand for, and recognition of, the proposed course by institutions, students and employers.

The procedures for submitting a new course for approval are contained in the University's [Higher Education Course Approval & Modification Procedure](#).

4. Certificates and Transcripts

4.1 The University shall confirm conferment of an award by producing a certificate recording:

- The student's legal name as registered with the University.
- The approved title of the course.
- The qualification obtained and any classification.
- The name of the College at which the student completed their studies.

4.2 The certificate will include the University's logo and bear the signature of the Academic Director & Provost and the Head of Institution. It will include a statement that it is accompanied by a transcript detailing the results achieved by the student. A transcript is a formal record of the results of all assessments undertaken during a course leading to an award.

5. Recognition of Prior Learning for the Transfer of Credit

5.1 The University's [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy & Procedure](#) allows applicants prior learning from a member state of the European Credit Transfer & Accumulation System ([ECTS](#)) to be recognised formally and have credit transferred towards their undergraduate course of study.

5.2 The University's [PG Recognition of Prior Certified & Experiential Learning Policy & Procedure](#) allows applicants prior learning from a member state of the European Credit Transfer & Accumulation System ([ECTS](#)) to be recognised formally and credit transferred towards their postgraduate course of study.

6. Academic Calendar & Modes of Attendance

6.1 The University's Academic Calendar is normally structured as follows:

- Semester/Trimester 1, comprised of 15 weeks (12 weeks taught)
- Semester/Trimester 2, comprised of 15 weeks (12 weeks taught)
- Summer Trimester, comprised of 15 weeks (for MA courses only)
- Weeks 13-14 of each Semester/Trimester are assessment weeks.
- Weeks 14-15 of each Semester/Trimester are marking & moderation weeks.

6.2 Modes of attendance are as follows:

Mode	Characteristics
Full-time	Students study for 40 hours per week during term-time.
Part-time	Students study for up to 20 hours per week. Teaching may take place during or outside of term-time, during daytime, evenings and/ or weekends.

7. Academic Credit

- 7.1 Credit is a quantified means of expressing equivalence of learning. Credit is awarded to a student in recognition of the verified achievement of designated intended learning outcomes at a specified level for a complete module. It is a way of comparing learning achieved in a variety of different contexts.
- 7.2 All credit-bearing modules shall be credit rated according to level and volume.

Credit Levels shall be

- **Level 4**
- **Level 5**
- **Level 6**
- **Level 7**

Credit volume

This reflects the notional student effort to successfully complete a module. It is determined by calculating the required learning hours on the basis of 1 credit for 10 hours of learning. The credit volume reflects all student effort, in particular taught provision, independent or guided study, assessment and revision. All University undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules from FHEQ Level 4-7 shall be weighted as 15, 30, 45 and 60 credits.¹

8. European Credit Transfer & Learning Hours

- 8.1 In line with the FHEQ and the FQ-EHEA, BIMM University credits must be based on a 40-hour week, where one credit equates to 10 notional learning hours. Credits may be converted to the European Credit Transfer & Accumulation System ([ECTS](#)) as follows:

Qualification	FHEQ Credits	ECTS Credits	Learning Hours
Foundation Diploma	60	30	600
Certificate of Higher Education	120	60	1200
Diploma of Higher Education	240	120	2400
Ordinary Degree	300	150	3000
Top-up Degree	120 ²	60	1200
Bachelor's Degree	360	180	3600
Postgraduate Certificate	60	30	600
Postgraduate Diploma	120	60	1200
Master's Degree	180	90	1800

¹ 60 credit modules are reserved for postgraduate courses only.

² 120 credits at Level 6.

9. Credit Framework

9.1 The University's taught degrees, diplomas and certificates shall be designed in accordance with the **credit values and rules** stated in the table below.³

Award Title	Level	Minimum Credit requirement	Minimum Period of Registration	Maximum Period of Registration	Award rules
Master's Degree (MA)	7	180	1 yr. Full Time (FT) 2 yrs. Part Time (PT)	2 yrs. FT 4 yrs. PT	Typically delivered over a single academic year and incorporating a project module, normally of 60 credits.
Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip)	7	120	2 semesters FT 4 semesters PT	4 semesters FT 8 semesters PT	These qualifications may be approved as standalone awards or as exit awards embedded within a Master's degree course.
Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)	7	60	1 semester FT 2 years PT	2 semesters FT 3 years PT	
BA/BMus (Hons) Single Honours	6	360	3 yrs. FT 6 yrs. PT	6 yrs. FT 8 yrs. PT	This is a degree comprising a main area of study from a single subject. It may also include option modules from outside the main area of study that have been approved as relevant to the course of study.
BA/BMus (Hons) Joint Honours	6	360	3 yrs. FT 6 yrs. PT	6 yrs. FT 8 yrs. PT	This is a degree comprising two main areas of study with an even split of core credits across all levels of the course.
BA/BMus (Hons) Top-up	6	120	1 yr. FT 2 yr. PT	2 yrs. FT 3 yrs. PT	This is a standalone one-year course that enables students with a Level 5 qualification to 'top-up' to an honours degree.
Ordinary Bachelor's Degree (BA/BMus)	6	300	3 yrs. FT 6 yrs. PT	6 yrs. FT 8 yrs. PT	This is an exit award granted in recognition of student learning where insufficient credit has been achieved to award an undergraduate honours degree in the subject.
Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)	5	240	2 yrs. FT 4 yrs. PT	4 yrs. FT 6 yrs. PT	These may be approved as exit awards only and will bear the name of the course along with the title of award.
Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	4	120	1 yr. FT 2 yrs. PT	2 yrs. FT 3 yrs. PT	
Foundation Diploma (FDip)	4	60	1 yr. PT	2 yrs. PT	This is not an exit award and applies only to named Foundation Diploma courses.

³ Source: Higher Education Credit Framework for England: guidance on academic credit arrangements in higher education in England, August 2008.

10. Credit and module status on postgraduate taught courses

- 10.1 Credit is module specific and is achieved upon successful completion of the module. All modules contributing to an award must be credit-bearing.
- 10.2 For full-time postgraduate taught courses comprising 180 credits, the usual pattern of delivery will be 60 credits in the Autumn Trimester, 60 credits in the Spring Trimester and 60 credits in the Summer Trimester.
- 10.3 Individual modules may contribute to more than one course, but the credit volume and level of the module shall be the same irrespective of the course to which the module contributes.
- 10.4 Modules may be delivered within a single semester or across two semesters. Where a module is delivered across two semesters, the minimum credit volume will be 30 credits.
- 10.5 Taught postgraduate courses will normally have 90 credits of modules that are aligned to the award title.

11. Naming Awards

- 11.1 For Undergraduate awards, successful students will receive one of the following:
- **Bachelor of Arts - BA (Hons)** degree. This is a classified award.
 - **Bachelor of Music - BMus (Hons)** degree. This is a classified award.
 - **Bachelor of Arts - BA (Hons) Top-up** degree. This is a classified award.
 - **Bachelor of Music - BMus (Hons) Top-up** degree. This is a classified award.
 - **Bachelor of Arts - Joint BA (Hons)** degree. This is a classified award.
 - **Foundation Diploma - FDip.** This is a classified award.
- 11.2 For Postgraduate taught awards, successful students will receive one of the following:
- **Master of Arts - MA** degree. This is a classified award.
 - **Postgraduate Certificate - PgCert.** This is a classified award.
- 11.3 The minimum requirements for the naming of awards are as follows:
- **Single Honours:** A degree comprising a main area of study from a single subject.
 - **Joint Honours:** A degree comprising two main areas of study, with an even split of core credits across all levels of the course. Each subject of study warrants specific recognition on the degree certificate and constitutes a named entry route for applicants. The two elements of study will be reflected in the degree title, e.g., Songwriting & Music Business.

12. Delivery

- 12.1 Undergraduate courses may be delivered in full-time or part-time mode where approved as such, and any derogations must be formally approved. Postgraduate taught courses may be delivered in full-time or part-time mode subject to formal approval.

13. Modules

- 13.1 There are **two types of modules**:
- **Core** – a module that all students on the course must take and secure the intended learning outcomes for the level/course.
 - **Option** – one of a group of modules that may be selected by students.
- 13.2 **Single Honours Undergraduate courses** will be approved with the following split of core and

option credits at each level:

- **Level 4 FDip:** 60 credits, all core.
- **Level 4 BA/BMus:** 120 credits, all core.
- **Level 5 BA/BMus:** A minimum of 75 credits core and maximum of 45 options.
- **Level 6 BA/BMus:** A minimum of 60 credits core (must include the Final Year Project) and maximum of 60 options.

13.3 **Joint Honours Undergraduate courses** will be approved with the following split of core and option credits at each level:

- **Level 4 BA/BMus:** 120 credits all core.
- **Level 5 BA/BMus:** 90 credits core and 30 options.
- **Level 6 BA/BMus:** 75 credits core (must include the Final Year Project) and 45 options.

13.4 **Modules** will be delivered as follows:

- **15 credits:** over one semester, requiring 150 hours of student effort.
- **30 credits:** over one or two semesters or, for the PgCert Learning & Teaching only, over one academic year, requiring 300 hours of student effort. Any undergraduate option modules weighted at this level will be restricted to those deepening knowledge of established subject areas, rather than broadening knowledge to new ones.
- **45 credits (levels 6 & 7 only):** over two semesters, requiring 450 hours of student effort.
- **60 credits (MA only):** over one or two semesters at level 7 only, requiring 600 hours of student effort.

Appendix: FHEQ Qualification Descriptors

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 4 on the FHEQ (e.g., Certificate of Higher Education)

The descriptor provided for this level is for any Certificate of Higher Education, which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications aligned with level 4 of the FHEQ.

Level 4 awards are made to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study
- an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.

Holders of a Level 4 qualification will be typically able to:

- evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work
- communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments
- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment.

Holders of a Level 4 qualification will typically have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.
- a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems. They will be able to communicate accurately and will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility. The Certificate of Higher Education may be a first step towards obtaining higher level qualifications.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 5 on the FHEQ (e.g., Diploma of Higher Education)

The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any foundation degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at level 5 of the FHEQ.

Level 5 awards are made to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed
- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context
- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

Holders of a Level 5 qualification will be typically able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis
- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms
- to specialist and non-specialist audiences and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively
- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.

Holders of a Level 4 qualification will typically have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.
- developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, for example HNDs, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field. Holders of qualifications at this level will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 6 on the FHEQ (e.g., Bachelor's Degree with Honours)

- The descriptor provided for this level of the FHEQ is for any bachelor's degree with honours which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at level 6 of the FHEQ.

Level 6 awards are made to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline
- an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline
 - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline
- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge
- the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).

Holders of a Level 6 qualification will be typically able to:

- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution - or identify a range of solutions - to a problem
- communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

Holders of a Level 6 qualification will typically have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts
 - the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.
- developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, the holder will have developed analytical techniques and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many types of employment. The holder of such a qualification will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements and to communicate them effectively.
- the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.
- Bachelor's degrees with honours form the largest group of higher education qualifications. Typically, learning outcomes for these courses would be expected to be achieved on the basis of study equivalent to three or four full-time academic years. In addition to bachelor's degrees at this level are short courses and professional 'conversion' courses, based largely on undergraduate material, and taken usually by those who are already graduates in another discipline, leading to, for example, graduate certificates or graduate diplomas.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 7 on the FHEQ (e.g., Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate)

- The descriptor provided for this level of the frameworks is for any master's degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at level 7, including postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas.

Level 7 awards are made 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.

Holders of a Level 7 qualification will be typically 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.

Holders of a Level 7 qualification will typically 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.

Master's degrees are often distinguished from other qualifications at this framework level (for example, advanced short courses, which often form parts of continuing professional development programmes and lead to postgraduate certificates and/or postgraduate diplomas) by an increased intensity, complexity and density of study. Master's degrees, in comparison to postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas, typically include planned intellectual progression that often includes a synoptic/research or scholarly activity.