

SECTION 11: CREDIT ACCUMULATION AND TRANSFER SCHEME (CATS) AND ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL)

11.0 Underlying Principles

Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) is a system which allows a student to make a claim for exemption from a module, or access to a particular level of study, where they have previous certificated learning from another institution, which is appropriate. In addition to the UK CAT Scheme, there is the European Community Course Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS). ECTS was developed by the European Union in order to support and facilitate the mobility of students within Europe. Like CATS, it provides a way of measuring and comparing learning achievements, and transferring them from one institution to another. ECTS enables both visiting and outgoing students to convert and transfer to the home institution, the credit points and grades achieved whilst on exchange.

11.1 Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS)

The regulations concerning the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme at Queen's (University General Regulations: Study Regulations 4.1 – 4.11) are outlined below. **Please note that regulations 4.8 – 4.10 are currently under review by the University. For further advice contact the Quality Assurance and Partnerships Office.**

Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme

4.1 *The University operates a Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) under which each undergraduate module or other course unit is assigned a level (0 to 4) and a number of credit points reflecting the value of the module or unit.*

4.2 *The scale, which is based on 120 credit points for each academic year of full-time undergraduate study, is widely accepted in universities throughout the United Kingdom and is intended to facilitate transfer between institutions. It is also compatible with the European Community Course Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS) which uses a scale of 60 credit points for each academic year of study. Queen's University CATS points are converted to ECTS points by dividing the Queen's points by 2. ECTS points are converted to Queen's points by multiplying the ECTS points by 2.*

Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme for undergraduate courses

4.3 *The credit awarded on successful completion of a module of value 1.0 (i.e. one sixth of a stage) is 20 points. Other module values or units are rated pro-rata, with a minimum credit of five points. There is no gradation of credit points for different levels of performance.*

4.4 *To qualify for the award of a primary degree, the credits gained must satisfy the General Regulations for Primary Degrees (Section 3 above).*

4.5 *To qualify for the award of a specific degree, the credits gained must satisfy the requirements of the pathway for that degree as set out in the Calendar. Credit points which count towards a particular qualification are designated as specific credit.*

4.6 *Credits which a student has been awarded for higher education courses which do not contribute to a specific degree or other qualification will also form part of the student's record and will be listed on the student's transcript. Such credit points are designated as general credit.*

4.7 *For degrees which are longer than three full-time academic years (i.e. more than 3 stages), each additional stage will require an additional 120 points. If it is inappropriate to assign a numerical level to such points, e.g. for an industrial placement or for a year abroad, they will be designated as Level P.*

4.8 *Credit awarded for courses undertaken elsewhere will be so designated on transcripts issued by this University. The maximum credit which can be so transferred is 240 points (see Study Regulation 3.10). The minimum credit which can be transferred is 10 points. Specific credit will*

normally be granted only for courses which match the pathway requirements of the degree programme for which the student proposes to enrol. The decision regarding the granting of credit will be taken by the relevant School.

4.9 Students who wish to take modules in other institutions as part of their degree pathway may do so, subject to the consent of the relevant Head of School or nominee. Students who participate in SOCRATES programmes may be permitted flexibility in the choice and sequence of modules, subject to the consent of the relevant Head of School or nominee. Students are reminded that modules must be taken at an appropriate Level. Students may be granted credit for equivalent modules successfully completed at other degree awarding institutions. Credit will not be granted for any modules that have already contributed towards the award of a degree.

4.10 Subject to pathway regulations, credit may be awarded for experiential learning up to a maximum of 120 points on an undergraduate degree programme or up to one-third of the total credit required for an undergraduate certificate or diploma.

4.11 The general limit for the validity of credit is 10 years. Specific limits may be set for particular subjects and these will be found in the School section of the Calendar.

11.2 Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme for Postgraduate Courses

The credit requirements for taught postgraduate awards are as follows:

Masters degree	180 points at level M
Postgraduate Diploma	120 points at level M
Postgraduate Certificate	60 points at level M

There is no gradation of credit points for different levels of performance. A student who completes a module successfully at the minimum level is awarded the same number of credit points as the student who obtains the top marks for the module. The student's mark or grade will reflect his or her level of performance and this will normally be stated in the student transcript.

Postgraduate modules are normally valued as 10, 20, 30 or 40 CATS points as appropriate, depending on the study time involved. The normal length of a written Masters dissertation is 15,000 – 20,000 words, worth 60 CATS. The normal length of a written Diploma project is 10,000 – 12,500 words, worth 40 CATS points.

The maximum credit points that can be transferred for postgraduate programmes is one-third of the total credit required for the programme which the student wishes to enter. The School concerned will take the decision about the granting of credit, normally on the recommendation of the admissions tutor or selector. The School must report details of the award of credit to Student Records. Any credit awarded for courses undertaken elsewhere will be clearly identified on the student's transcript.

11.3 Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) is the generic term used for the award of credits on the basis of demonstrated learning that has occurred at some time in the past. It encompasses:

- Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL)

Recognition and accreditation of prior learning gained from formal courses (interpreted broadly to include any designated learning experience) which has previously been assessed and/or accredited at HE level. This is also known as credit transfer.

- Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

The process of assessing and then credit-rating learning which has its source in some experience which occurred prior to the point of entering the course, where the experience was not previously assessed and credit rated at HE level.

The procedures for the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) are currently under review. Contact Quality Assurance and Partnerships Office for advice.