



# Level 5: a changing “UK” perspective?

**Aalborg 2015**

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# Drawing on work done in 2015



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# The “UK” Level 5 landscape: i

Level 6	Bachelor degree 360 UK credits	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree (?)	??????	??????
Level 5	Diploma in Higher Education 240 UK credits	Foundation degree 240 credits	Higher National Diploma (HND) 240 credits	Professional body awards ? credits	Other awarding organisations ? credits
Level 4	Certificate in Higher Education 120 UK credits	(Certificate in Higher Education) 120 credits	Higher National Certificate (HNC) 120 credits	Professional body awards ? credits	Other awarding organisations: (CPD) ? Credits



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## The “UK” Level 5 landscape: ii

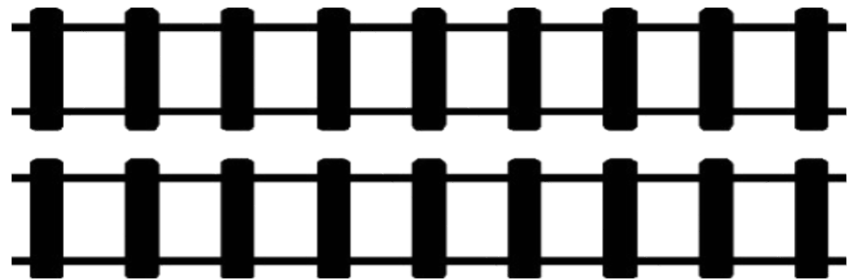
Universities	Colleges of Further Education	Private colleges (alternative providers)	Professional bodies	Degree (DA) & Higher Apprenticeships (HA)
Doctorate Level 8			Professional Level 8	
Masters degree Level 7		Professional Level 7	Professional Level 7	Masters (DA) Level 7
Bachelor degree Level 6	(Bachelor) Professional Level 6	(Bachelor) + Professional Level 6	Professional Level 6	Bachelor (DA) Level 6
<b>Foundation degree (Fd) Dip. HE Level 5</b>	<b>HND Fd Professional Level 5</b>	<b>HND Level 5</b>	<b>Professional Level 5</b>	<b>Fd (DA) HND (HA) Professional (HA) Level 5</b>
Cert. HE Level 4	HNC Professional Level 4	HNC Level 4	Professional Level 4	Various (HA) Level 4



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## “Train tracks”?

- Are we trapping Level 5 students in “train tracks”? Are we helping (or hindering) students to cross from one side to another?
- From level 4 to 5; 5 to 6? And ...
- 5 to 7 ??



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# The “UK” credit landscape: i: > 2015

We have well established:

- Qualification structures well defined (?)
- Clear programme and module outcomes which support consistency across the sector(?)
- Structures that (might) support mobility (?)
- Structures and processes to support working across boundaries (eg academic/vocational, FE/HE) (?)



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## ii: 2015/2016

- New qualification descriptors – for degrees at levels 5, 7, 8 (from September 2016)
- Intermediate awards with defining learning outcomes
- New higher and degree apprenticeships development: credit implications
- Qualifications and credit frameworks?



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### iii: A clear strategic picture? 2016 >

- Mobility? Credit defining programmes within institutions rather than supporting student development and progression
- “UK”: Each of home UK countries going its own way / using credit in own systems / more fragmented approach
- QAA: developing credit guidelines with QAA (uncertainty over future of QAA)
- Language of credit: fine-tuning award definitions, condonement, compensation
- Learning gain? Just what is it and how would you measure it for students progressing with credit from elsewhere?
- Europe ! (BREXIT??)



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# “Crossing the tracks” for Level 5 students?

- Level 5 - Level 6
- Level 5 – Level 7
- Straight in to Level 5 (6, 7)
- Professional exemptions at Level 5
- Credit transfer mechanisms to/from Level 5
- Recognition of equivalences at Level 5
- RPL into / at Level 5
- Institutional transfer from Level 5



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## Qualification Characteristics Statements 2015

- Doctoral Degree Characteristics (2011)
- Master's Degree Characteristics (2010)
- Foundation degree qualification benchmark (2010/2004)
  
- first time Level 5 defined in a qualification characteristics statement (much stricter)



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# Foundation degree characteristics: issues

- Distinctiveness of foundation degrees against other level 5 qualifications
- Extent to which it is 'work-related' rather than 'work-based'
- Value in its own right or as a progression route
- Employer role in assessment



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## General credit issues arising

- How/is credit (and credit transfer) actually used?
- Issues of equivalence in a European context in relation to the credit-rating of degrees?
- What is the role of ‘work’ in Foundation degrees and how is this credit rated?



# Bedfordshire's challenge

“Positively defined learning outcomes” i

- **Named** exit awards have learning outcomes defined in the course documentation
- But no learning outcomes defined for **unnamed** awards such as:
  - CertHE and DipHE
  - Non-honours degree
  - PGCert/PGDip



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## “Positively defined learning outcomes” ii

- Issue for Level 5?
- Where is the check made that learning outcomes have been met, as opposed to the accumulation of the requisite credit?
- Could **generic** learning outcomes be meaningful?
- Implementing ‘named’ awards across all programmes



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Proposed generic learning outcomes	FHEQ level 5 (Foundation Degree)	FQHEIS level 8	SEEC level 5
<p><b>Students who are awarded a Diploma of Higher Education should be able to:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of the scope of their subject area and its established theories, concepts and principles, including awareness of competing perspectives and the limitations of, and current challenges to, knowledge in the subject</li> <li>2. Apply those theories, concepts and principles to new contexts, recognising how the limitations in their knowledge influence their approach</li> <li>3. Critically analyse information and examine data for patterns, evaluating the significance and limitations of their findings</li> <li>4. Use the main methods of enquiry in the subject to collect information, comparing alternative techniques to select the appropriate method, and communicating the findings in a variety of forms appropriate to the audience and the subject area</li> <li>5. Synthesise their knowledge to define problems, generate ideas, formulate arguments and identify and critically evaluate solutions in unfamiliar contexts</li> <li>6. Analyse their own performance and capabilities to determine their individual learning needs and how to develop their skills, using feedback from others and taking the wider needs of the context into account</li> <li>7. Take responsibility and initiative in applying knowledge and a range of skills to working with limited supervision within defined guidelines in contexts of varying complexity and predictability, interacting with others as necessary</li> </ol>	<p>Foundation degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 [1]</li> <li>• ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied. [2] including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context</li> <li>• knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, [4] and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study [5]</li> <li>• an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge. [2]</li> </ul> <p>Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, [3] and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis [5]</li> <li>• 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 [4]</li> <li>• undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences [6] that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.</li> </ul> <p>And holders will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making. [7]</li> </ul>	<p>Diplomas of Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A knowledge and understanding of the scope and main areas of the subject(s) and its interactions with related subjects. Detailed knowledge of some key areas which may include some knowledge of current issues in limited specialised areas. [1]</li> <li>• Familiarity and understanding of a range of the essential theories, principles and concepts and an awareness of major issues at the forefront of the subject(s). [1]</li> <li>• Familiarity and effective deployment of essential/routine materials, techniques and practices of the subject(s). [4]</li> <li>• Skills for the gathering, critical analysis and presentation of information, ideas, concepts and/or quantitative and qualitative data that is core to the subject(s). [4] This will include the use of ICT as appropriate to the subject(s).</li> </ul> <p>Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use their knowledge, understanding and skills to critically evaluate and formulate evidence-based arguments and identify solutions to clearly defined problems of a generally routine nature; [5]</li> <li>• communicate the results of their study and other work accurately and reliably using a range of specialist techniques; [4]</li> <li>• identify and address their own major learning needs within defined contexts and to undertake guided further learning in new areas; [6]</li> <li>• apply their subject-related and transferable skills in contexts where the scope of the task and the criteria for decisions are generally well defined, but where some personal responsibility and initiative is required. [7]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operates in situations of varying complexity and predictability requiring the application of a wide range of techniques and information sources. [7]</li> <li>• Acts with limited supervision and direction, within defined guidelines [7] accepting responsibility for achieving personal and/or group outcomes and/or outputs.</li> <li>• Has detailed knowledge of well-established theories and concepts. [1]</li> <li>• Demonstrates an awareness of different ideas, contexts and frameworks and recognises those areas where the knowledge base is most/least secure. [1]</li> <li>• Identifies, analyses and communicates principles and concepts recognising competing perspectives. [1]</li> <li>• Undertakes research to provide new information [4] and/or explores new or existing data to identify patterns and relationships.</li> <li>• Uses appropriate theoretical models to judge the significance of the data collected recognising the limitations of the enquiry. [3]</li> <li>• Collects and synthesises information to inform a choice of solutions to problems in unfamiliar contexts. [5]</li> <li>• Analyses a range of information comparing alternative methods and techniques. [4]</li> <li>• Selects appropriate techniques/criteria for evaluation and discriminates between the relative relevance and significance of data/evidence collected. [3]</li> <li>• Identifies external expectations and adapts own performance accordingly. [6]</li> <li>• Undertakes complex and non-routine performance tasks. Analyses performance of self and others and suggests improvements. [6]</li> <li>• Interacts effectively within a team. [7] giving and receiving information and ideas and modifying responses where appropriate. Recognises and ameliorates situations likely to lead to conflict.</li> <li>• Is aware of personal responsibility and professional codes of conduct.</li> <li>• Assesses own capabilities using justifiable criteria set by self and others taking the wider needs of the context into account. [6]</li> <li>• Uses feedback to adapt own actions to reach a desired aim and reviews impact. [8]</li> <li>• Adapts interpersonal and communication skills to a range of situations, audiences and degrees of complexity. [7]</li> </ul>



# Professional practitioners: the challenges?

- “How do all the parties involved in professional education work together in support of practitioners?”
- What are the principal hurdles faced by professional bodies who wish to work with higher education institutions (HEIs) ?”

(International Compliance Association)



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# Case study 1: Compliance

1. Professionals are increasingly being assessed on their 'fitness and properness':
  - How can HEIs support the development of credits for competency/mastery while the focus of Higher Education remains on notional learning hours?
  - What mechanisms should HEIs use to support the evaluation and credit of skills (e.g. influencing, negotiating, counselling)?

(International Compliance Association)



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## 2. Consolidation of experience, education and training:

- What are the best practice models and tools to enable professional practitioners, who may lack a first degree or recent academic experience, to gain recognition and value for their experience and training in a coherent and consolidated way?
- What type of audit should professional bodies put into place to satisfy HEI's of the status of their members (i.e. competency in a senior role/in a specific role)?

(International Compliance Association)



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# Case study 2: Police investigators

## University case study

- Full-time police officers
- No background in higher education
- 10 years + work experience
- Now need degree (UK 360 credits; ECTS 180)
- “Virtual” level 5 award “created”
- Awarded 240 / 120 credits for “virtual” level 5
- Progress straight into level 6



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# Case study 3: Engineering

## Exemplifying Qualifications

- Chartered Engineer (CEng)
  - Accredited BEng(Hons) plus further learning to Master's level
- Incorporated Engineer (IEng)
  - Accredited BEng, or **Fd/HND**, or N/SVQ4
- EngTech/ICT*Tech*
  - Accredited Advanced/Modern Apprenticeship, or QCF Level 3 or above



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# But...

- “The reality for the IET is that approximately 65% of registrants do not have fully-exemplifying qualifications
- Most of these have partial qualifications, with work-based and other experiential learning
- Some have no relevant formal qualifications”



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SEEC Credit Level  
Descriptors for  
Higher Education

## SEEC 2016

- Credit level descriptors (revisions in 2004, 2010, 2016)



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# QAA 2015: Characteristics statement Foundation Degree



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# The future for Level 5?



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# Acknowledgements

- SEEC
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
- University of Bedfordshire
- University of Sunderland
- Institute for Engineering and Technology
- International Compliance Association



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