

QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications

(Extract)

Annex 1

Descriptor for qualifications at Doctoral (D) level: Doctoral Degree

Doctorates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- i) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- ii) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- iii) the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- iv) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- a) make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- b) continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches;

and will have:

- c) the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Annex 2

Qualification nomenclature

Public understanding of the achievements represented by higher education qualifications requires a consistent use of qualification titles. The following guidelines are designed to assist institutions in achieving consistency in the ways in which qualification titles convey information about the level, nature and subjects of study.

Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The titles 'Honours', 'Master' and 'Doctor' should be used only for qualifications that meet in full the expectations of the qualification descriptors at H, M and D levels respectively.• Titles with the stem 'Postgraduate' (eg Postgraduate Diploma) should be restricted to qualifications where the learning outcomes of the programme of study match relevant parts of the descriptor for a qualification at M level or above.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Titles with the stem 'Graduate' (eg Graduate Diploma) may be used for qualifications from programmes of study that typically require graduate entry or its equivalent, and have learning Outcomes that match relevant parts of the descriptor for a qualification at H level.
<p>Nature</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The title 'degree' should be used only for a qualification that meets in full the expectations of a qualification descriptor at levels I, H, M or D. • Use of the abbreviated titles 'PhD' and 'DPhil' should be restricted to qualifications where assessment is solely by a final thesis or published work; or by artefact or performance that is accompanied by a written commentary placing it in its academic context. • The abbreviated title 'MPhil' should normally be reserved for qualifications awarded following extended masters courses that typically involve a substantial element of research or equivalent enquiry. • When used with the stems 'Graduate' or 'Postgraduate', the title 'Certificate' should normally signify study equivalent to at least one-third of an academic year, and the title 'Diploma' should normally signify study equivalent to at least two-thirds of an academic year.
<p>Subject</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Titles used for doctoral qualifications awarded after programmes that include a substantial taught element should normally include the name of the discipline in the title (eg EdD for Doctor of Education). • Qualification titles that reflect the subject focus of programmes of study in two disciplines (eg a joint Honours award) should consider nomenclatures based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'A and B', where there is an approximately equal balance between two components; • 'A with B' for a major/minor combination where the minor subject accounts for at least a quarter of the programme. <p>Qualification titles should not normally reflect more than three subject components. Where there are more than three significant components, the title 'Combined Studies' would be appropriate.</p>