Cardiff Academy

POLICY /// ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS

# Academic Regulations and Award Framework

The rules that govern Cardiff Academy's own awards – the International Foundation Year, International Year One and Pre-Masters programmes – including programme structure, credit and level, grading, pass and progression rules, reassessment, classification of the overall result, and the issue of certificates and transcripts.

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|---|---|---|---|
| REFERENCE | **CA-ACA-01** | VERSION | **1.0 (Approved)** |
| POLICY OWNER | **Principal** | APPROVED BY | **Academic Board, ratified by the Board of Governors** |
| ISSUE DATE | **October 2026** | APPROVAL DATE | **October 2026** |
| REVIEW CYCLE | **Annual (before each academic year)** | NEXT REVIEW DUE | **October 2027** |
| APPLIES TO | **Students, teaching staff, Assessment Boards, partner universities, external moderators** | PUBLISHED | **Website; programme handbooks; partner due-diligence pack** |

**RELATED POLICIES** CA-ACA-02 Curriculum, Programme Design and Review; CA-ACA-04 Assessment, Marking, Moderation and Feedback; CA-ACA-05 Academic Integrity; CA-ACA-06 Extenuating Circumstances; CA-ACA-07 Academic Appeals; CA-ACA-08 University Progression

**LEGAL ENTITY** Cardiff Education Group Ltd, trading as Cardiff Academy (Company No. 14569122). Registered office: 168 City Road, Cardiff CF24 3JE. Teaching premises: 8 Drake Walk, Cardiff CF10 4LG

## 1 Purpose and status

These regulations define the academic standards of Cardiff Academy awards. They are approved by the Academic Board and apply to all students registered on the programmes listed in section 2. Where a programme has approved variations (for example a higher pass mark set by a partner university), these are stated in the programme specification and take precedence for that programme.

**AWARD STATUS** Cardiff Academy awards are certificates of the Academy. They are not degrees or university awards, and they are not (at the date of issue) regulated qualifications on the Regulated Qualifications Framework. Partner universities recognise them for admission under individual progression agreements. This must be stated clearly in publicity and on transcripts.

## 2 Programmes and awards

| Programme | Award | Level (benchmark) | Normal length | Credit |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| International Foundation Year (IFY) – pathways: Business, Finance and Management; Engineering, Computing and AI; Life Sciences, Health and Medicine; Law, Politics and Social Sciences | Cardiff Academy Certificate in International Foundation Studies | Designed at RQF / CQFW Level 3 (comparable in content and demand to GCE A level) | 3 terms (30 weeks); Extended route 4 terms | 120 credits |
| International Year One (IYOne) – Business and Management; Computing and Artificial Intelligence; Engineering | Cardiff Academy Certificate in International Year One (named subject) | Designed at FHEQ / CQFW Level 4 (first-year undergraduate) | 3 terms (30 weeks) | 120 credits |
| Pre-Masters | Cardiff Academy Postgraduate Preparation Certificate | Designed at FHEQ / CQFW Level 6 | 2 or 3 terms | 120 credits (3-term) / 80 credits (2-term) |
| Pre-sessional English | Cardiff Academy Certificate of Achievement in English for Academic Purposes | CEFR B2–C1 | 6–20 weeks | Not credit-bearing |

One credit represents 10 notional hours of learning, including teaching, independent study and assessment.

## 3 Programme structure

Each programme consists of modules defined in an approved **programme specification** and **module syllabus** (CA-ACA-02). Standard module sizes are 20 and 40 credits.

| Programme | Structure |
|---|---|
| **IFY** | English for Academic Purposes (40 credits) + Academic Skills, Digital Literacy and Research Project (20 credits) + three pathway subject modules (20 credits each) |
| **IYOne** | Six subject modules (20 credits each); Academic English for Undergraduate Study is additional and not credit-bearing, compulsory for students below IELTS 6.0 (or equivalent) on entry |
| **Pre-Masters** | Academic English for Postgraduate Study (40) + Research Methods and Data Analysis (20) + Critical Thinking and Postgraduate Study Skills (20) + Specialist Subject Study (20) + Independent Research Project (20) |

## 4 Registration and progression through the programme

- Students are registered on one programme and pathway. Changes of pathway are permitted within the first **four weeks**, with the Director of Studies' approval and subject to visa rules.
- Students must meet the attendance requirements in CA-ADM-04.
- The maximum period of registration is the normal length plus one term (to allow for reassessment or approved interruption), subject to immigration requirements for sponsored students.

## 5 Assessment

- Each module is assessed by a combination of coursework and supervised assessment, as set out in the module syllabus. **At least 50% of every academic module is assessed under supervised conditions** (examination, in-class test, practical, presentation with questions, or viva) to protect academic integrity.
- Assessment is conducted and moderated in line with CA-ACA-04.
- Marks are expressed as whole percentages (0–100).

## 6 Grading scale (academic modules)

| Mark | Grade | Descriptor |
|---|---|---|
| **80–100** | A* | Outstanding |
| **70–79** | A | Excellent |
| **60–69** | B | Very good |
| **50–59** | C | Good |
| **45–49** | D | Satisfactory |
| **40–44** | E | Pass |
| **0–39** | U | Fail |

### 6.1 English for Academic Purposes

EAP modules are marked 0–100 for each of reading, writing, listening and speaking, and overall. Marks are reported with an **indicative IELTS-equivalent band and CEFR level** using the Academy's EAP Equivalence Table, approved annually by the Academic Board:

| EAP mark | Indicative IELTS equivalent | CEFR |
|---|---|---|
| **90–100** | 7.5+ | C1+ |
| **80–89** | 7.0 | C1 |
| **70–79** | 6.5 | B2+ |
| **60–69** | 6.0 | B2 |
| **50–59** | 5.5 | B2 (low) |
| **40–49** | 5.0 | B1+ |
| **0–39** | Below 5.0 | B1 or below |

The equivalence is maintained through standardisation, external moderation and periodic benchmarking against secure English language tests.

## 7 Passing a module

- An academic module is passed with an overall module mark of **40%** or above.
- Where a module has more than one component, a minimum component mark of **30%** is required in each component, unless the module syllabus states otherwise.
- **EAP** is passed with an overall mark of **50%** or above and at least **45%** in each skill. Progression to many universities requires higher EAP marks (commonly 60–70 overall with 55–60 in each skill); these are stated in progression agreements.
- Credit is awarded for each module passed.

## 8 Reassessment

- A student who fails a module is entitled to **one** reassessment opportunity in the failed component(s), normally in the next assessment period.
- The module mark after reassessment is **capped at 40%** (E) for academic modules, and at the pass mark for each reassessed EAP skill, unless the original failure was due to accepted extenuating circumstances, in which case the reassessment is treated as a first attempt and is not capped.
- A student who fails a module after reassessment may, at the Assessment Board's discretion, be permitted to repeat the module with attendance once, subject to visa and fee arrangements.

## 9 Compensation

The Assessment Board may award credit for **one** failed academic module of no more than 20 credits with a mark between **35% and 39%**, provided the student's overall mark is at least **50%**. EAP and any module designated by a progression agreement as a required subject are not compensatable.

## 10 Award, overall mark and classification

To receive the award, a student must achieve the full credit for the programme (including any compensated credit).

- The **overall mark** is the credit-weighted average of the **academic modules** (for the IFY, the three subject modules and the Academic Skills, Digital Literacy and Research Project module), calculated to one decimal place and rounded to the nearest whole number (0.5 rounds up). **EAP is reported separately** and is not included in the overall mark.
- The **overall grade** is determined from the overall mark using the grading scale in section 6.
- **Classification:** Distinction (overall mark 70% or above); Merit (60–69%); Pass (40–59%).
- Partner universities may set specific requirements (for example an overall mark, a minimum mark in a named module, and an EAP mark). Whether a student has met a partner's conditions is confirmed under CA-ACA-08.

## 11 Exit award

A student who leaves without completing the programme receives a **transcript of credit achieved**. Students who achieve at least 60 credits may be awarded a Cardiff Academy Certificate of Credit.

## 12 Assessment Board

Marks, progression decisions and awards are confirmed only by the **Assessment Board** (CA-ACA-04), which is attended by the external moderator. No mark is final, and no result may be released to a student or university as final, until the Board has confirmed it. Provisional marks may be shared with universities only where clearly labelled as provisional and permitted by the partnership agreement.

## 13 Certificates and transcripts

- Certificates and transcripts are issued only on the authority of the Assessment Board, signed by the Principal, and produced from the student record system using controlled templates.
- The **certificate** states the student's full name (as in the passport), the award title and pathway, and the date of award.
- The **transcript** states the student's name and ID, programme and pathway, period of study, each module with code, credit, mark and grade; EAP overall and skill marks with IELTS-equivalent and CEFR level; the overall mark, grade and classification; credits achieved; the grading scale; the level; and the statement that this is a Cardiff Academy award.
- Each document carries a unique serial number and security features. The Academy keeps a permanent register of awards and provides a **verification service** to universities, employers and embassies at **enquiries@cardiffacademy.co.uk**.
- Replacement certificates are issued once, marked "Replacement", on proof of identity and payment of the published fee.
- An award may be revoked if it is later found to have been obtained through academic misconduct or fraud.

## 14 Academic misconduct, extenuating circumstances and appeals

These are governed by CA-ACA-05, CA-ACA-06 and CA-ACA-07.

## 15 Changes to these regulations

Changes are approved by the Academic Board and normally take effect from the start of the next academic year. Changes affecting current students are made only where necessary and after consultation, and will not disadvantage students part-way through a programme.

## Compliance mapping

This policy has been written to meet, and to evidence, the following external requirements. Inspectors and university partners can use this table to locate the relevant provisions.

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|---|---|
| **ISI Educational Oversight (PFE) standards** | Standards 1–4 (educational purpose; suitable courses; qualifications meeting UKVI requirements); Standards 11, 18–19 (reliable assessment; attainment measured against a framework) |
| **British Council Accreditation UK criteria** | T11 (comprehensive course design); T14 (written course outlines); T16 (evaluating, monitoring and recording progress; certificates and reports) |
| **UKVI Student sponsor guidance** | Student sponsor guidance – course level and approved qualification; course completion (BCA) |
| **University partner due diligence** | Partner universities rely on these regulations to interpret our marks and grades; consistency with the UK Quality Code and RQF/CQFW level descriptors |
| **Legislation and statutory guidance** | Consumer Rights Act 2015; Equality Act 2010 |

## Document control

| Version | Date | Author / reviewer | Summary of changes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0.9 | Pre-2026 | Various | No written regulations; practice reflected in IFY transcripts and certificates (2023–2026); NCUK Academic Handbook (reference) |
| 1.0 | October 2026 | Principal | Academic regulations written for the 2027 curriculum (IFY, IYOne, Pre-Masters, Pre-sessional) and aligned with the new programme specifications. |

| APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD | SIGNATURE | DATE |
|---|---|---|
| Chair of the Board of Governors | | |