

**QAA consultation  
on the revised Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)**

**Response  
from the Mathematics, Statistics and Operational Research Benchmark Group**

**May 2008**

different matter from expecting the students to actually engage directly with "frontier" work.

We note that the phrase "or informed by" appears in some places in the FHEQ descriptors but is omitted in others. We see no reason why it should not be universal.

We illustrate by considering the FHEQ Framework descriptor for a Bachelor's degree with honours, which is as follows.

**Bachelor's degrees with honours are awarded 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 (eg refereed research articles and/or original matee of4o[OhcTws O8(s)2

situation regarding taught master's programmes of MSc type.

Again we find that the FHEQ descriptors are far too ambitious to be realistic at this level.

stand, fit for purpose as MSOR descriptors. We urge the QAA to adopt them, either by actually incorporating them into the FHEQ document or by stating explicitly that they stand as equivalent descriptors within the QAA's documentation.