Senate Regulation 6: Regulations governing taught postgraduate programmes of study

Introduction

6.1   These regulations apply to all taught postgraduate programmes and students.

6.2   Senate may approve programmes which lead to the award of Masters degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas or Postgraduate Certificates. Such programmes may provide for intermediate awards for a student who does not complete or satisfy the examiners in the programme for which s/he is registered but otherwise satisfies the criteria for such an intermediate award.

6.3   The taught postgraduate qualifications awarded by the University are the degrees of Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MSc), Master of Laws (LLM), Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Engineering Management (MEM), Master of Education (MEd), Master of Research (MRes), and the awards of Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate.

6.4   The title and programme specification for each taught postgraduate programme, the name of the award(s) to which it leads, and all awards made to students, shall be subject to the approval of Senate.

6.5   A programme may be approved with more strict reassessment, progression, or award requirements than those set out in these regulations where there is a demonstrable requirement from a professional or statutory regulatory body. In such cases any variation from this regulation must be approved by the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee following consideration by the relevant Programme Approval Panel. Any such additional requirements shall be stated in the relevant programme specification.

Programme structure

6.6   The structure of the degrees of MA, MSc, LLM, MEM, MEd or MBA shall be approved by a Programme Approval Panel and shall be one of the following:

- 150 taught credits and a 30 credit dissertation or research project

- 120 taught credits and a 60 credit dissertation or research project

- 90 taught credits and a 90 credit dissertation or research project

- 60 taught credits and a 120 credit dissertation or research project

6.7   The structure of the degree of MRes shall be approved by a Programme Approval Panel and shall comprise taught modules to the value of between 30 and 60 credits and a dissertation or research project of between 120 and 150 credits.

6.8   A Postgraduate Certificate will comprise 60 taught credits.

6.9   A Postgraduate Diploma will comprise 120 taught credits.

6.10   A Masters degree shall have at least 60 taught credits to be approved with an intermediate award of Postgraduate Certificate, and at least 120 taught credits to be approved with an intermediate award of Postgraduate Diploma.

6.11   Any formal progression points for an individual programme will be approved by the relevant Programme Approval Panel and specified in the programme specification. A progression point defines the number of modules and level of attainment which a student must achieve in a specified period to progress to the next stage of their studies.

6.12   A student's progress will be reviewed at each progression point to determine whether s/he has met the requirements to progress to the next stage of the programme. In each case, where a student has failed to meet the requirements to progress it will be determined whether s/he shall be referred to the Board of Examiners with a recommendation that s/he be withdrawn from the programme. The Board of

Examiners shall consider whether any intermediate award may be made based on the student's academic achievement.

6.13 The submission date for the final piece of assessment for a full-time programme with a normal period of registration of one year, and with a start date at the beginning of the academic year, shall be 30 September in each year.

6.14 For a programme approved with a different normal period of registration, or with a start date at a different time of the year, the relevant Programme Approval Panel shall agree the submission date for the final piece of assessment and this shall be set out in the programme specification.

Modules

6.15 A taught module shall normally be not less than 15 credits and not more than 30 credits in volume.

6.16 Each module specification shall state how the components of a module shall be combined to form a module mark and whether a particular mark must be gained in an individual component for the module to be passed.

6.17 Each assessment for a module shall be marked or graded in accordance with the generic grade descriptors issued by the Learning and Teaching Committee for postgraduate programmes.

6.18 The pass mark shall be 50% or a grade of 'C' for all assessments and modules. Where a module is passed at 50% credit shall be given for that module, subject to the satisfaction of any additional criteria required under paragraph 6.16.

The following outcomes are permitted for an individual assessment component and a module:

Assessment or Module Mark	Grade	Outcome
≥70%	A	Pass
60 – 69%	B	Pass
50 – 59%	C	Pass
40 – 49%	D	Fail
< 40%	F	Fail

6.19 Each assessment component and module mark shall be expressed as an integer, or a grade, and components shall be combined using the rounding conventions of the University's student record system.

Re-assessment

6.20 Where a student fails to achieve the 50% pass mark in a module s/he shall, subject to the requirements of paragraphs 6.21, 6.23 and 6.25 below, be entitled to re-sit or re-submit any of the failed components of assessment associated with the module in which they scored less than 50%, on one occasion only. A student will not be re-assessed in a module or module component where the 50% pass mark has already been obtained, except where a module mark of 50% or more has been obtained but a pass in the failed component is a requirement for a pass in the module as a whole. In such cases, the student shall be entitled to resit the failed component for the purposes of passing the module but the original module mark will not be amended.

6.21 The nature of a piece of coursework, for example work done in the laboratory or during fieldwork, may mean that the coursework cannot be reassessed in the same form. If the coursework is necessary to assess the learning outcomes for the module, no suitable alternative assessment is possible, and failure in that component means that the module is failed overall, then the module will be deemed to have been failed without the possibility of reassessment.

6.22   The maximum mark awarded for a re-assessed component of assessment will be 50%. Where a student completes a reassessment in a component, the higher of the original mark or the capped reassessment mark will be used to calculate the module outcome.

6.23   The number of credits of taught modules that a student shall be entitled to re-sit or re-submit is 75%of the credit value of the taught component of the programme, up to a maximum value of 90 credits.

6.24   A student may, at the discretion of the Panel of Examiners, be permitted to undertake an alternative piece of re-assessment in place of a failed assessment component in a taught module. Alternative re-assessment methods shall be stated in the relevant module specification. In exceptional circumstances, further alternative arrangements may be approved by the Panel of Examiners for the programme.

6.25   One resubmission of the dissertation or research project will normally be allowed. However, where practical or laboratory work is involved, see paragraph 6.26 below.

6.26   Where a student has completed a dissertation or research project which must be done in residence, for example, one based on laboratory or field work, and has failed the module, a Panel of Examiners will either

- provide an opportunity for a resubmission, where the failure relates to the quality of the written submission for the module; or

- provide an alternative reassessment, where it is possible to do so to allow the student an appropriate opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes for the module; or

- deem the student to have failed the module without an opportunity for reassessment, where the failure relates to laboratory or field work which cannot be repeated.

Progression requirements

6.27   The progress of each student shall be considered by a Board of Examiners at the end of the taught component of the programme. The Board of Examiners shall determine whether a student is permitted to progress to the dissertation or research project. Where the structure of a programme is such that a student has already begun work on his/her dissertation or research project, the Board of Examiners shall determine whether the student may continue with this work.

6.28   In making progression decisions for students on MA, MSc, LLM, MEM, and MBA programmes, a Board of Examiners shall adopt the following progression requirements:

Taught Module Credits Failed at First Attempt	Progression Rule
Up to 30 credits	A student will proceed to, or continue with, the dissertation or research project and is entitled to re-sit failed modules up to the maximum credit value set out in paragraph 6.23 above, at the earliest opportunity. If, after reassessment, a student has any module mark of < 40%, Grade 'F', s/he will not be allowed to continue work on the dissertation or research project and shall be considered at the next meeting of the Board of Examiners.
31 - 45 credits	A student will proceed to or continue with, the dissertation or research project and is entitled to re-sit failed modules up to the maximum credit value set out in paragraph 6.23 above, at the earliest opportunity. If, after reassessment, a student has more than 30 credits of failed modules, or any module mark of < 40%, Grade 'F', s/he will not be allowed to continue work on the dissertation or research project and shall be considered at the next meeting of the Board of Examiners.

Taught Module Credits Failed at First Attempt	Progression Rule
46 – 90 credits	A student will not proceed to, or continue with, the dissertation or research project but is entitled to re-sit failed modules, up to the maximum credit value set out in paragraph 6.23 above at the earliest opportunity. If, after reassessment, a student has 30 credits or fewer of failed modules, and no module mark < 40%, s/he will be allowed to progress to, or continue with, the dissertation research project. If, after reassessment, a student has more than 30 credits of failed modules, or any module mark of < 40%, Grade 'F', s/he will not be allowed to continue work on the dissertation or research project and shall be considered at the next meeting of the Board of Examiners.
More than 90 credits	A student will not proceed to, or continue with, the dissertation or research project, but is entitled to re-sit failed modules up to the maximum credit value set out in paragraph 6.23 above in order to meet the requirements for intermediate award, where the relevant programme specification makes provision for such an award. Where there is no provision for an intermediate award, or where the number of credits failed is such that the student cannot redeem a sufficient number to meet the requirements for an intermediate award, a board of examiners shall terminate his/her course for academic failure.

6.29 In making progression decisions for students on MRes programmes, a Board of Examiners shall adopt the progression requirements set out in paragraph 6.28 above, but shall not permit a student to progress to, or continue with, a dissertation or research project unless it would be possible for the student to meet the requirements for award following successful reassessment.

Criteria for and classification of awards

6.30 A Postgraduate Certificate, a Postgraduate Diploma and a Masters degree may be awarded with pass, merit, or distinction. In all cases classification is determined **either** on the basis of an overall credit weighted average **or** preponderance of credits, whichever leads to the better result for a student. The following descriptors apply:

Classification	Description
Pass	To be awarded a pass a student will have demonstrated achievement of the specified learning outcomes of the programme to a satisfactory standard, demonstrating a critical and substantial understanding of the topic. They will have demonstrated the ability to develop an independent, systematic and logical or insightful argument or evaluation. They will also have demonstrated a significant degree of competence in the appropriate use of the relevant literature, theory, methodologies, practices, and tools and shown evidence of clarity, focus and cogency in communication.
Merit	To be awarded a merit a student will have demonstrated achievement of the specified learning outcomes of the programme to a very good standard, demonstrating a well-developed, critical and comprehensive understanding of the topic. They will have demonstrated the ability to develop an independent, systematic and logical or insightful argument or evaluation. They will also have demonstrated a high degree of competence in the appropriate use of the relevant literature, theory, methodologies, practices, and tools, and shown a high level of clarity, focus and cogency in communication.

Classification	Description
Distinction	To be awarded a distinction a student will have demonstrated achievement of the specified learning outcomes of the programme to an excellent standard, demonstrating a sophisticated, critical and thorough understanding of the topic. They will have demonstrated evidence of originality of thought and the ability to develop an independent, highly systematic and logical or insightful argument or evaluation. They will also have demonstrated excellence in the appropriate use of the relevant literature, theory, methodologies, practices, and tools, and shown excellent clarity, focus and cogency in communication.

6.31 For a Postgraduate Certificate, a student must have attempted every assessment component for each of the taught modules, unless mitigating circumstances have been accepted, and have achieved the following thresholds:

Award	Taught modules	Failed credit
Postgraduate Certificate	A credit-weighted average mark of at least 50%, or at least 45 credits at 50%, grade 'C', or above	No more than 15 credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D' , and no module mark < 40%, grade 'F'
Postgraduate Certificate with Merit	A credit-weighted average mark of at least 60%, or at least 45 credits at 60%, grade 'B' or above	No credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D'
Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction	A credit-weighted average mark of at least 70%, or at least 45 credits at 70%, grade 'A' or above	No credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D'

6.32 Where a Postgraduate Certificate is to be awarded as an intermediate award and a student has attempted taught modules to a value greater than 60 credits, the thresholds set out in 6.31 above shall be applied to the 60 credits identified to meet the criteria for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate.

6.33 For a Postgraduate Diploma, a student must have attempted every assessment component for each of the modules of the taught modules, unless mitigating circumstances have been accepted, and have achieved the following thresholds:

Award	Taught Modules	Failed credit
Postgraduate Diploma	A credit-weighted average mark of at least 50%, or at least 90 credits at 50%, grade 'C', or above	No more than 30 credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D', and no module mark < 40%, grade 'F'
Postgraduate Diploma with Merit	A credit-weighted average mark of at least 60%, or at least 90 credits at 60%, grade 'B' or above	No more than 15 credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D' and no mark < 40%, grade 'F'
Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction	A credit-weighted average mark of at least 70%, or at least 90 credits at 70%, grade 'A' or above	No credits with a mark of less than 50%, grades 'D' or 'F'

6.34 Where a Postgraduate Diploma is to be awarded as an intermediate award and a student has attempted taught modules to a value greater than 120 credits, the thresholds set out in 6.33 above shall be applied to the 120 credits identified to meet the criteria for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma.

6.35 For a Masters programme with a structure of 150 credits of taught modules and a dissertation/research project of 30 credits, a student must have attempted every assessment component for each of the taught modules, unless mitigating circumstances have been accepted, and have achieved the following thresholds:

Award	Performance	Failed credit

Masters Degree	A dissertation/project mark of at least 50% (grade C) **and**
	Either:
	  a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 50% **or**
	  b) at least 120 credits at 50% or above from the taught modules, (grade C)
		No more than 30 credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D', and no module mark < 40%, grade 'F'

Masters Degree with Merit	A dissertation/project mark of at least 57% **and**
	Either:
	  a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 60% **or**
	  b) at least 75 credits at 60% or above from the taught modules, (grade B)
		No more than 15 credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D' and no mark < 40%, grade 'F'

Masters Degree with Distinction	A dissertation/project mark of at least 67% **and**
	Either:
	  a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 70% **or**
	  b) at least 75 credits at 70% or above from the taught modules, (grade A)
		No credits with a mark of less than 50%, grades 'D' or 'F'

6.36 For a Masters programme with a structure of 120 credits of taught modules and a dissertation/research project of 60 credits, a student must have attempted every assessment component for each of the taught modules, unless mitigating circumstances have been accepted, and have achieved the following thresholds:

Award	Performance	Failed credit
Masters Degree	A dissertation/project mark of at least 50% (grade C) **and** Either: a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 50% **or**	No more than 30 credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D', and no module mark < 40%, grade 'F'

Award	Performance	Failed credit
	b) at least 90 credits at 50% or above from the taught modules, (grade C)	
Masters Degree with Merit	A dissertation/project mark of at least 57% **and** Either: a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 60% **or** b) at least 60 credits at 60% or above from the taught modules, (grade B)	No more than 15 credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D' and no mark < 40%, grade 'F'
Masters Degree with Distinction	A dissertation/project mark of at least 67% **and** Either: a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 70% **or** b) at least 60 credits at 70% or above from the taught modules, (grade A)	No credits with a mark of less than 50%, grades 'D' or 'F'

6.37 For a Masters programme with a structure of 90 credits of taught modules and a dissertation/research project of 90 credits, a student must have attempted every assessment component for each of the taught modules, unless mitigating circumstances have been accepted, and have achieved the following thresholds:

Award	Performance	Failed credit
Masters Degree	A dissertation/project mark of at least 50% (grade C) **and** Either: a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 50% **or** b) at least 60 credits at 50% or above from the taught modules, (grade C)	No more than 30 credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D', and no module mark < 40%, grade 'F'

Award	Performance	Failed credit
Masters Degree with Merit	A dissertation/project mark of at least 57% **and** Either: a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 60% **or** b) at least 45 credits at 60% or above from the taught modules, (grade B)	No more than 15 credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D' and no mark < 40%, grade 'F'
Masters Degree with Distinction	A dissertation/project mark of at least 67% **and** Either: a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 70% **or** b) at least 45 credits at 70% or above from the taught modules, (grade A)	No credits with a mark of less than 50%, grades 'D' or 'F'

6.38 For a Masters programme with a structure of 60 credits of taught modules and a dissertation/research project of 120 credits, a student must have attempted every assessment component for each of the taught modules, unless mitigating circumstances have been accepted, and have achieved the following thresholds:

Award	Performance	Failed credit
Masters Degree	A dissertation/project mark of at least 50% (grade C) **and** Either: a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 50% **or** b) at least 30 credits at 50% or above from the taught modules, (grade C)	No more than 30 credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D', and no module mark < 40%, grade 'F'
Masters Degree with Merit	A dissertation/project mark of at least 57% **and** Either: a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 60% **or** b) at least 30 credits at 60% or above from the taught modules, (grade B)	No more than 15 credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D' and no mark < 40%, grade 'F'

Award	Performance	Failed credit
Masters Degree with Distinction	A dissertation/project mark of at least 67% **and** Either: a) an overall credit-weighted average mark of at least 70% **or** b) at least 30 credits at 70% or above from the taught modules, (grade A)	No credits with a mark of less than 50%, grades 'D' or 'F'

6.39   For an MRes programme, a student must have attempted every assessment component for each of the taught modules, unless mitigating circumstances have been accepted, and have achieved the following thresholds:

Award	Taught modules	Dissertation/research project	Failure
Master of Research degree	A mark of 50% or a grade of 'C' in all modules	A mark of 50% or a grade 'C' or above	No credits with a mark of less than 50% grade 'D' or 'F'
Master of Research degree with merit	A mark of 50% or a grade of 'C' in all modules	A mark of 57% or above	No credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D' or 'F'
Master of Research degree with distinction	A mark of 50% or a grade of 'C' in all modules	A mark of 67% or above	No credits with a mark of less than 50%, grade 'D' or 'F'

Aegrotat Awards

6.40   An aegrotat award may be considered in certain circumstances where a student is prevented through illness or other sufficient cause from completing the final assessment for the taught component of the award. Exemption may not be granted from completing the dissertation or research project.