

VII. Integrated Masters Examination Conventions

These conventions apply to all students registered on Integrated Masters programmes in academic year 2017/18.

Variations to these conventions, non-standard stage weightings and exceptions to the Qualifications and Credit Framework can only be agreed by University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (ULTSEC), except where the power is explicitly vested in the relevant Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (FLTSEC) or Degree Programme Director (DPD) in the conventions themselves.

A. Introduction

Conventions 1-26 of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions shall apply to Integrated Masters Programmes

Additional Notes:

Pass mark

The pass mark for level 7 modules and for the award of an Integrated Master's degree is 50. For the sake of clarification, this represents a higher standard of work than the undergraduate (levels 4-6) pass mark of 40. This rule applies to level 7 modules taken at Stage 3, where there may be a mixture of level 6 and level 7 modules.

F. Return of Marks

27. The mark for each module on an Integrated Masters degree programme shall be returned to the board of examiners, and disclosed to students, using the established University Common Scales below, depending on the level of the module.

	Summary description applicable to level 7 Degree Classification (DC) Modules	Summary description applicable to Degree Classification (DC) Modules below level 7	Summary description applicable to modules not used for degree classification
0-39	Fail	Fail	Failing
40-49	Fail	Third Class	Basic
50-59	Second Class, Second Division	Second Class, Second Division	Good
60-69	Second Class, First Division	Second Class, First Division	Very Good
70-100	First Class	First Class	Excellent

28. The final mark returned to the board of examiners for a module shall be rounded to the nearest whole number on the University Common Scale.

The rounding of marks shall follow the convention: decimal marks with a decimal component of 0.5 or larger shall be rounded up to the next whole number; marks with a decimal component of less than 0.5 shall be rounded down to the next whole number.

G. Releasing and Adjusting Marks

Conventions 29-31 of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions shall also apply to Integrated Masters awards.

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/2017/>

H. Progression from One Stage to Another

Convention 32 of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions shall also apply to Integrated Masters awards.

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/2017/>

30. Subject to meeting the internal progression thresholds described below, a student is permitted to proceed from one stage to the next of the programme of study if the student passes or is deemed to have passed all the modules in the current stage or the stage is passed by discretion, exercised under Conventions 38-40 (Undergraduate Examination Conventions) notwithstanding failures in specific modules.

- a) When the stage is passed by discretion, notwithstanding failures in specific modules, the specific modules are not deemed to have been passed, and any subsequent calculations must use the best actual mark for each of the specific modules.
- b) If a student fails up to 20 credits of non-Core modules at Stage 2 after two attempts, or accumulates such fails in up to 20 credits over Stages 2 and 3, it is the normal expectation that the stage will be passed by discretion (in recognition that it is still possible for a student to gain an Honours degree by right). A board of examiners deciding not to exercise discretion in this context must minute a specific reason for not doing so.
- c) A student who has failed a first attempt at one or more modules and has not yet completed a second attempt may not proceed to the next stage unless granted permission by the PEC Committee (in response to the student submitting a PEC form).

To progress on an Integrated Masters programme, a student must meet the internal progression thresholds at the end of Stages 2 and 3. Students not meeting the threshold at the end of Stage 2 will be transferred onto the appropriate Bachelor's degree programme (UG Progress Reg F18). Students not meeting the threshold at the end of Stage 3 will not be permitted to progress to Stage 4 and will be considered for the appropriate Stage 3 exit award applying the principles of the examination

conventions for students on a 3 year degree. Note that the Board of Examiners is required to consider all students whose final stage average (after rounding of marks) is within two marks of the progression threshold, applying the principles of Discretion as outlined in Convention 49.

The thresholds for all Integrated Masters Programmes shall be stated in the degree programme regulations for each award, but must as a minimum be:

Stage 2 to 3 – stage average of 50

Stage 3 to 4 – stage average of 50

with the stage average in each case being as defined in Undergraduate Convention H32.

Degree programme regulations may stipulate thresholds that are more demanding and/or more specific than the minimum stage averages listed above.

In accordance with Conventions 58, 60 and 62, a student not permitted to proceed may be considered for the award of a Bachelor's Degree, a Higher Education Certificate or Higher Education Diploma, applying the principles of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions.

J. Principles of Compensation

31. At Stages 1, 2 and 3 of degree programmes a student shall, on assessment and any reassessment, be deemed to have passed all modules at the stage, notwithstanding that marks of less than 40 have been obtained in one or more modules of levels 4-6 and/or marks of less than 50 in one or more level 7 modules for that stage, provided that each of the following conditions for compensation are met:

- a) the stage average (calculated according to Undergraduate Convention H32), is not less than 40;
- b) no single mark for any module of levels 4-6 assessed is below 35;
- c) no single mark for any level 7 module assessed is below 40;
- d) the modules for which marks lie between 35 and 39 (levels 4-6) or 40-49 (level 7) do not include core modules (UG Progress Regulation B4(c) and have total credit value at most 40 (out of the 120 credits studied).

The modules in d) above are deemed to be **passed by compensation**.

A student who passes all modules, including modules passed by compensation, and who meets the threshold requirements in H30 will thereby pass the stage and will be eligible to progress to the next stage of the programme.

32. Note that in relation to Undergraduate Convention H32, a combination of level 6 and level 7 modules at Stage 3 does not lead to a difference in weighting.

33. In any case where any form of non-modular aggregated assessment is used at Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the degree programme, the relevant degree programme regulations shall specify whether compensation may be applied to the non-modular

aggregated assessment and, if so, the relevant degree programme examination conventions shall set out how such compensation may be applied.

34. The principles of compensation (Conventions 31-35) shall also apply to any consideration for the award of a Bachelor's degree, a Higher Education Certificate or Higher Education Diploma.

35. Where the rules for compensation do not apply, the board of examiners may still exercise discretion under Conventions 18, 38-40 (Undergraduate Examination Conventions), 49-51.

K. Principles of Discretion

Conventions 38-40 of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions apply to Integrated Masters Programmes.

L. Reassessment

Note: The rules in this section should be read in conjunction with Convention 30 above which defines the thresholds for progress from Stage 2 to Stage 3 and from Stage 3 to Stage 4.

36. A student who passes a module (including by compensation or discretion), at any stage of the degree programme, cannot be reassessed for any component of that module.

37. A student at the final stage of an Integrated Master's degree programme shall, under the conditions laid down in Conventions 42 and 53, have the right to one reassessment of some / all failed modules.

38. A student at any other stage of an Integrated Master's degree programme has the right to a maximum of one reassessment of any failed modules (Convention 41).

39. The form of the reassessment at any stage may vary from the original, at the discretion of the board of studies. Note that the board of studies may delegate this authority to the board of examiners, but that the students who are to be reassessed must be informed of the style of reassessment to be adopted.

40. Exceptionally, a student may be permitted to resit a module that has been passed at University standard, but not to external accreditation requirements. Such resits are for accreditation purposes only and stand outside of the University Examination Conventions. Final module marks and award calculations are not affected. Programme-specific arrangements for accreditation resits are included in the degree programme regulations <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>.

Timing of reassessment at any stage other than the final stage

41. Second Attempt

- a) A student who has the right to a second attempt will automatically be entered for failed modules at the next available occasion of assessment (normally in August/September of the same academic year as the first attempt);

- b) A student required, under degree programme regulations, to spend a period outside the United Kingdom, or take up a placement within the United Kingdom, during the reassessment period in August/September may, subject to the approval of the degree programme director, elect to be reassessed in the following August/September.

Timing of Reassessment at the final stage of an Integrated Masters degree programme

42. Second Attempt

When a student elects to be reassessed in some or all failed assessments in the final stage of a degree programme (as determined under Convention 52), the reassessment will normally be at the next normal occasion or at an alternative occasion designated by the board of examiners.

M. The Award and Classification of Degrees

43. A student is recommended, as of right, for the award of an appropriate Integrated Masters degree (according to Convention 47) if all the requirements for the award are met, and

- a) all the modules beyond Stage 1 in the degree programme are passed, *or*
- b) no more than a maximum of 20 credits beyond Stage 1 are failed

and:

- c) the final programme average calculated as specified in Convention 46 is no less than 50.

44. Marks from all modules studied at Stages 2, 3 and 4 are used to determine degree classification and so the marks for these modules must be returned using the University Common Scale (DC Scale); note that appropriate modules taken during an intercalating year, in accordance with the degree programme regulations may be excluded from the calculation.

45. Any non-modular aggregated assessment at Stages 2, 3 and 4, may contribute to degree classification as specified in the relevant degree programme regulations.

46. The degree programme regulations shall specify the weight to be given to each stage beyond Stage 1. The stage averages (as defined in Undergraduate Convention H32) shall be combined, according to the prescribed weightings, to produce an **overall average**, which is also rounded to one decimal place. The **final programme average** is then obtained by rounding the overall average to the nearest whole number according to Convention 29. For a 4-year programme (unless Stage 3 is regarded as an intercalating year – see Undergraduate Convention 50) the weighting Stage 2: Stage 3: Stage 4 shall be one of 1:2:2; 1:3:3; or 1:2:3 unless ULTSEC has approved an exemption.

47. Students shall be entitled, as of right, to the class of degree yielded by the final programme average as defined in Convention M43 And using the appropriate Stage average as defined in Undergraduate Convention H32.

48. A final module mark is calculated by using the most recent component marks. In some cases, this may be a combination of second and first attempt component marks, depending on the normal resit arrangements for the module. It is not the case, however, that the best component marks automatically carry forward to the final module mark.

Use of Discretion

The Board of Examiners under Conventions 18, 38-40 (Undergraduate Examination Conventions) has a general power to exercise discretion to treat any student more generously than the numerical and other conventions require.

49. Discretion may be applied to progression (Undergraduate Examination Conventions 38-40) or to classification decisions. The board of examiners must consider whether or not to exercise discretion (including the possibility of awarding a higher classification of degree, if relevant) when:

- a) There is a positive assessment of the impact of medical or other mitigating circumstances by the Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee (Undergraduate Examination Conventions 13 and 14).

In addition, for final year students, the board of examiners must consider whether or not to exercise discretion to award a higher classification of degree when:

- b) Students have final programme averages (as defined in Convention M46) of 68 or 69, 58 or 59, 48 or 49. The board of examiners shall have regard to the following:
 - i. The overall profile of individual marks achieved in modules;
 - ii. Exceptional performance by the student in any particular module, including, for example, research-based modules or in an oral examination where this is part of the degree programme regulations;
 - iii. Progressive improvement in performance by the student during the final 2 (or 3) stages of study, only where the stages 3 and 4 are equally weighted.

The board may also use discretion to recommend the award of an Honours degree of any class to a student who has not been recommended for the award of an Honours degree under Convention 53.

50. The University does not permit the use of a viva voce either as a means of monitoring standards or for determining whether a higher classification should be recommended.

51. In any discussion regarding the possible exercise of discretion, the board shall ensure that no student in similar circumstances has been treated less favourably as a result of any particular decision. The reasons for recommending or not recommending a higher class of degree shall be recorded in the minutes of the proceedings. The

minutes shall record the issues raised and the decisions reached, whilst maintaining, wherever possible, the anonymity of board members contributing to the debate. Chairs of Boards of Examiners should report in writing annually to the relevant Board of Studies on the exercise of discretion for the recent examination sessions. Reports should then be forwarded to faculty learning, teaching and student experience committees for review. No student shall be identified by name in this report.

N. Recording of Module Marks after Reassessment, Compensation or Discretion

52. Where a student has achieved a passing mark following reassessment at any stage, including the final stage, or has been deemed to have passed in an assessment by the exercise of compensation or discretion, the overall module mark used by the board of examiners shall be a mark of 40 for level 4-6 modules and 50 for level 7 modules, except for the purposes of compensation (Convention J31). The mark achieved by the student must be recorded on the transcript, with an appropriate note if compensation or discretion has been applied, and a statement that a mark of 40 or 50 for the module as appropriate will be used in any calculations. However, in such cases, the board of examiners may, in its ultimate discretion, have regard to the actual mark obtained at resit.

P. Failing Performance by Integrated Masters Degree Students

53. A student who, following completion of Stage 4, has not been recommended for the award of a Masters (Hons) degree under Convention 49 or by the use of discretion under Convention 49, will be considered for the appropriate Stage 3 exit award (i.e. a BEng or BSc) under the Undergraduate Examination Conventions and applying the principles therein. If, in addition, a student has passed at least 60 credits at Stage 4, of which at least 40 credits are at level 7 and the remaining credits at level 6, they shall additionally be entitled to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate.

54. The award of a Postgraduate Certificate is not classified and, unless specific recognition arrangements are in place, carries no professional accreditation. The certificate will be '*Postgraduate Certificate in X*' corresponding to the '*Honours degree in X*' for which the student was a candidate.

55. Notwithstanding the above, a student may elect to be reassessed in some or all of the failed modules, subject to:

- i. The maximum recommendation available after reassessment is a lower second class (2:ii) honours Integrated Masters degree and discretion may not be applied to award a higher class than this;
- ii. In the event that the student's performance at reassessment is less than that at the first attempt, the assessment at the second attempt will be used to calculate the entitlement.

56. Students recommended by the board of examiners for the award of an Integrated Masters degree after the first occasion of assessment, may not enter for re-assessment.

57. Exceptionally, a student may be permitted to resit a module that has been passed at University standard, but not to external accreditation requirements. Such resits are for accreditation purposes only and stand outside of the University Examination Conventions. Final module marks and award calculations are not affected. Programme-specific arrangements for accreditation resits are included in the degree programme regulations <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>.

R. Recommendation of other than an Integrated Masters Degree

Conventions 61-63 of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions shall not apply to Integrated Masters programmes

Bachelors Degree

58. A candidate for an Integrated Masters degree who has satisfied the examiners in at least 360 credits, of which at least 90 credits are at level 6 or above, shall be awarded a Bachelors degree in that programme, typically when;

- a) the student is entitled to proceed into Stage 4, but instead elects to withdraw from study at the University; *or*
- b) the student elects to withdraw from study at the University during Stage 4 of the programme; *or*
- c) the student leaves the programme to transfer to an unrelated programme within the University, without carrying forward any credit; *or*
- d) the student fails to satisfy the examiners in Stage 4 of the programme.

59. The award and classification of the Bachelors Degree is calculated on the basis of the student's performance at the end of Stage 3 (first attempts) and following the principles laid out in *Undergraduate Examination Conventions M*. Unless specific recognition arrangements are in place the Bachelor award carries no professional accreditation. The Bachelors degree will be '*BSc/ BEng in X*' corresponding to the '*Integrated Masters degree in X*' for which the student was a candidate.

Higher Education Diploma

60. A candidate for an Integrated Masters degree who has satisfied the examiners in at least 240 credits, of which at least 90 credits are at level 5 or above, shall be awarded a Higher Education Diploma in that programme, typically when:

- a) the student is entitled to proceed into Stage 3, but instead elects to withdraw from study at the University; *or*
- b) the student elects to withdraw from study at the University during Stage 3 of the programme;
- c) the student leaves the programme to transfer to an unrelated programme within the University, without carrying forward any credit

- d) the student fails to satisfy the examiners in Stage 3 of the programme

61. The award of a Higher Education Diploma is not classified and, unless specific recognition arrangements are in place, carries no professional accreditation. The diploma will be '*Higher Education Diploma in X*' corresponding to the '*Honours degree in X*' for which the student was a candidate.

Higher Education Certificate

62. A candidate for an Integrated Masters degree who has satisfied the examiners in at least 120 credits, of which at least 90 are at level 4 or above, shall be awarded a Higher Education Certificate in that programme, typically when:

- a) the student is entitled to proceed into Stage 2, but instead elects to withdraw from study at the University; *or*
- b) the student elects to withdraw from study at the University during Stage 2 or Stage 3 of the programme;
- c) the student leaves the programme to transfer to an unrelated programme within the University, without carrying forward any credit
- d) the student fails to satisfy the examiners in Stage 2 or Stage 3 of the programme.

63. The award of a Higher Education Certificate is not classified and, unless specific recognition arrangements are in place, carries no professional accreditation. The certificate will be '*Higher Education Certificate in X*' corresponding to the '*Honours degree in X*' for which the student was a candidate.

S. Subsuming of Awards

64. A student awarded an Integrated Master's level honours degree will not be eligible for a Bachelor's Honours degree and/or a Higher Education Diploma / Certificate for the same programme of study. Similarly, students awarded a Higher Education Diploma will not be eligible for the award of a Higher Education Certificate for the same programme of study.

T. Mid-year Student Withdrawals

65. A student who withdraws from the University during the academic year will be considered for the appropriate exit award at the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Examiners.

U. Aegrotat

66. The board of examiners may award an Aegrotat degree to a student who has registered for the final stage of the programme but who presents sufficient evidence of ill health or any other extenuating circumstance such that, in the judgement of the board, there is no reasonable possibility that the student can complete the degree programme. When considering the option of recommending this award, boards of examiners should be mindful of the possibility of enabling the student to sit the assessments at a later date, and so be eligible for a classified degree. In addition, the

board should consider the appropriateness of recommending the award of a Bachelor's degree.

67. It is not open to the board to grant an Aegrotat to students registered on certain professionally accredited programmes. A student to whom an Aegrotat is awarded shall be deemed to have obtained Honours but without classification.

68. The Board of Examiners shall have the power to award a degree posthumously as it sees fit.

V. Retention of Assessed Work

Convention 72 of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions applies.

W. Exemptions to these Conventions

73. Certain programmes are exempt from the requirements of the *Undergraduate Examination Conventions* which relate to assessment, reassessment and the use of the University Common Scale.

Note that referral to each individual set of degree programme regulations for full information on programme exemptions is required. A complete register of exemptions can be found at:

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/governance/modules/regulations>