

Key changes to University Regulations 2019/20

Work was undertaken during 2018/19 to make the General Regulations and Taught Programme Regulations more student focussed and streamlined. The Taught Programme Progress Regulations and Exam Conventions (now Assessment Regulations) have been amalgamated and a separate section produced for Board of Examiner procedures (now Rules for Boards of Examiners).

Following a detailed review of the Faculty of Medical Sciences' non-modular programmes and subsequent findings and recommendations. Appropriate amendments to specific University Regulations have been made to accommodate the non-modular programmes, where possible.

The following are specific changes of principle to note for 2019/20:-

I General Regulations for Taught and Research Programmes

Wording change to clarify that both part-time and full-time students may stand for office as a Sabbatical Officer.

IV Regulations for Taught Programmes – Assessment Regulations

In May 2018 Senate approved the decision that the Regulations should be amended to reflect the following:

- Students could be required to pass certain final stage modules, but only when this is an accreditation requirement
- Resitting students should be able to receive a class of degree corresponding to their final calculated programme average, but should not be able to improve their average at the second attempt.
- In programmes where students must pass one or more modules as an accreditation requirement, a non-accredited 'exit' degree with a different name must be provided.

The relevant Undergraduate, Integrated Masters and Foundation Degree Assessment Regulations have been amended and updated in response to this decision.

J. Reassessment

Wording has been updated to clarify that a Master's or Postgraduate Diploma student who fails more than 40 credits, or a Postgraduate Certificate student who fails more than 20 credits, at the first attempt of the taught element of the programme, will not normally be permitted to continue without explicit approval by the Board of Examiners.

35. If you are a Master's or Postgraduate Diploma student who fails more than 40 credits, or a Postgraduate Certificate student who fails more than 20 credits, at the first attempt of the taught element of the programme, you will not be permitted to continue without explicit consent of the Board of Examiners (see also Regulation V F 88 (d)).

K. Resubmission of Dissertation – Postgraduate Taught

Wording has been updated to clarify that a Postgraduate Taught student who fails more than 40 credits of the taught element of the programme at the first attempt will not normally be permitted to resubmit their dissertation without explicit agreement of the Board of Examiners.

42. As a Master's student, you are entitled to one resubmission of your dissertation provided you have failed no more than 40 credits of the taught element of the programme at the first attempt. If you fail more than 40 credits of the taught element of the programme at the first attempt, you will not normally be permitted to resubmit your dissertation without explicit agreement of the Board of Examiners. Resubmission should be within a defined period agreed by the Board of Examiners, normally within three months of the Board of Examiners' decision.

V Specific Progression and Classification Rules for Different Types of Taught Programme

C. Undergraduate degrees – specific rules on progression and classification

Assessment Regulations have been updated to provide instruction on the order in which academic or PEC grounds are considered, in order to ensure clarity and consistency

Use of Discretion

In addition to the principles set out in IV Assessment Regulations I 27 and 28

33.

- a) *After the first attempt at the final stage, the Board of Examiners must consider whether or not to exercise discretion to award a higher classification of degree when you have a final programme average within two marks of a classification boundary. The Board of Examiners shall have regard to the following:*
 - i *The overall profile of individual marks achieved in modules;*
 - ii *Exceptional performance in any particular module (for example research-based modules or an oral examination where this is part of the degree programme regulations);*
 - iii *Where the stages which determine your degree classification are equally weighted, progressive improvement in performance during the final 2 (or 3) stages of study.*
- ~~cb)~~ *The Board may also use discretion to award an Honours degree of any class to you if you are not entitled to an Honours degree under Regulations IV.C.42-40. However, a recommendation for a lower class of Honours degree than indicated by the student's final programme average may only be made after a second attempt at the final stage.*
- ~~ceb)~~ *When there is a positive assessment of the impact of medical or other mitigating circumstances by the Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee.*

Assessment Regulation amended, as set out below, to take into account part time students in the context of Boards permitting students to take a second attempt before a formal progression decision is made.

Progression from One Stage to Another

24. You will be permitted to proceed from one stage to the next of the programme of study if you pass or are deemed to have passed all the modules in the current stage, or the stage is passed by discretion (exercised under Regulations V.C.33 despite failures in specific modules.

Decisions on modules and progression will be taken at the end of each attempt for each stage, other than set out in d) below:

- a) When the stage is passed by discretion, despite 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 specified modules
- b) If you fail up to 20 credits of non-core modules at Stage 2 of a 3 year programme after two attempts, or over Stages 2 and 3 of a 4 year programme, it is the normal expectation that the stage will be passed by discretion (in recognition of the fact that it is still possible for a student to gain an Honours degree by right subject to regulation V.C.29). A Board of Examiners deciding not to exercise discretion on this matter must minute a specific reason for not doing so.
- c) If you fail a first attempt at one or more modules and have not yet completed a second attempt, you may not proceed to the next stage unless granted permission by the Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee In accordance with Regulations VI.A.8 - 10, if you are not permitted to proceed, you may be considered for the award of a Higher Education Certificate or Higher Education Diploma.
- d) If the Board of Examiners meets before you have completed a first attempt at a stage, either because you are studying part-time or because your personal circumstances have delayed progress, then
 - i. The Board may decide that you have passed a module by right, passed a module by discretion or failed a module when there is sufficient information to make such a decision.
 - ii. The Board may defer a decision on a module when there insufficient information to make such a decision. Typically this will occur when there is a reasonable possibility of you passing by compensation or discretion
 - iii. If a decision on a module is deferred, the Chair of the Board may permit you to take a second attempt at the module before the completion of the first attempt of the stage, provided that it is clearly understood that a second attempt might prove unnecessary.

G. The Award and Classification of Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates (entry awards)

Wording has been updated to clarify that students may be required to take a viva as a means of monitoring standards only.

106. You may be required to take a viva voce examination at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, as a means of monitoring standards.

Wording has been updated to clarify that a student will be recommended for a Merit or Distinction if all the modules are passed or deemed to be condoned fails

92. You are entitled to the award of an appropriate Master's degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate if all the requirements for the award are met and all the modules in the programme are passed (at either first or second attempt).

If you pass all core modules and fail up to 20 credits of non-core modules from the taught stage of the programme (whether after one attempt or two), you will be entitled to the appropriate Master's degree or Postgraduate Diploma, provided that the final programme average is at least 50. If you are on a classified programme (except as provided by Regulation IV.F.100 you will be eligible as of right only for the award of a pass; you would only be entitled to a Merit or Distinction, as indicated by your final programme average, if you have passed all modules (at either first or second attempt, or have accumulated no more than 20 credits in condoned fails). The same

principle applies to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate if you fail up to 10 credits of non-core modules.

VII Regulations for Research Masters Degree Programmes (excluding MPhil programmes)

Where appropriate the Research Masters Degree Programmes Regulations have been amended to mirror the changes noted in the Postgraduate Taught Progress Regulations and Examination Conventions sections above and the Doctor of Philosophy Progress Regulations and Examination Conventions below.

University Education Committee (UEC) approved the following key changes to PGR Regulations on the 8th July 2019.

VIII Master of Philosophy Progress Regulations and IX Examination Conventions

Where appropriate, Master of Philosophy Progress Regulations and Examination Conventions have been amended to mirror the changes noted in the Doctor of Philosophy sections below.

X Doctor of Philosophy Progress Regulations

Replacement of previous Section 'M Interruption of Study' and Section 'S Extensions of Time for Submission' with one new Section M entitled Change of Circumstances to incorporate the same information.

Small number of text changes and updated weblinks throughout the document (Regulations 8, 13, 17, 23, and 40)

XI Doctor of Philosophy Examination Conventions

Small number of text changes throughout the document (Convention 4, 7 and 26)

4. All examiners will be nominated by the relevant head of school in consultation with the candidate's academic supervisor. Such nominations shall be submitted on [ePortfolio ~~the approved form~~](#) at the same time as the candidate submits an application for approval of thesis title. This should normally be three months before the thesis is submitted. (The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/Publications.htm> provides further details in the section, 'Criteria for Appointment of Examiners'.)

7. The supervisory team will provide candidates with the opportunity to comment on the nominated examiners. If the candidate ~~has a~~ ~~believes that there is~~ a concern about the nominated examiners this should be drawn to the attention of the supervisory team and the head of school in writing, as soon as possible. Examiner appointments will, however, only be reviewed ~~only~~ if it is clear ~~that~~ there may be bias or prejudice by an examiner.

26. There should normally be no discussion about the oral examination between the candidate and the examiners in advance of the oral examination and throughout the entire examination process.

XII Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) Regulations

Where appropriate, **Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) Regulations** have been amended to mirror the changes noted in the Doctor of Philosophy sections above.

XIII Rules for the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees

Updated regulations to incorporate the previously approved change to electronic only submission for examination purposes, as well as a reorganisation of existing text to provide greater clarity.

3. ~~An electronic copy of the thesis must be~~ Two soft-bound copies and an electronic copy of the thesis must be submitted for examination to the relevant graduate school administrator. The submitted electronic ~~copies~~ of the thesis become the absolute property of the University.
4. ~~An~~ The electronic copy of the thesis ~~soft-bound copies~~ will normally be sent to the examiners, unless it has been previously agreed to provide a soft-bound copy to the external examiner. ~~Additionally, where requested, an electronic copy may also be sent.~~
5. Candidates must submit a higher-research degree examination entry form or statement, along with the electronic copy of thesis, ~~which contains, where appropriate:~~

XIV Rules for the Form of Theses

Reorganisation of existing text in Sections 1 to 5 to provide greater clarity.

Additional point 'g' in Section 6 relating to word-limits for 'Practice Based Research Degrees' directing candidates to information in the Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees.

There are different word limits for the following Practice-Based research degrees in Arts and Humanities and these are detailed in the Handbook for –Examiners of Research Degrees (<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/Publications.htm>):

- Fine Art and Digital Cultures PhD
- Music PhD
- Film Practice PhD
- Theatre/Performance PhD
- Creative Writing PhD
- Architecture, Planning and Landscape MPhil and PhD
- Creative Practice PhD in Museum, Gallery and Heritage Studies

Note: If a thesis exceeds the maximum word-limit, a candidate should apply for a concession from the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies before submission.

Updates to 'Published Work Submissions – for Staff Candidates' section (Convention 7 onwards) to reduce duplication and simplify the section.

112. Publications selected for submission by a candidate should demonstrate progressive development or coherence in research activity.

123. The amount of research activity should be equivalent to that expected from a three year full-time PhD.

134. All items must have been produced within a minimum of three years and a maximum of six years.

145. The number and scope of the works required for a Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work submission, and the nature and length of the accompanying Doctoral Statement are detailed below (as determined in each drawn-up in each faculty and subject to approval approved by the University Education Committee)–are detailed below: The number of publications should be increased pro-rata if jointly authored publications are submitted.

156. Candidates should not include multiple versions of the same paper in their submission

167. Humanities and Social Sciences

~~Publications selected for submission by a candidate should demonstrate progressive development or coherence in research activity.~~

~~The amount of research activity should be equivalent to that expected from a three year full-time PhD.~~

- a) Candidates would normally be expected to submit at least five articles in refereed journals or the equivalent in books, monographs, works of art, performances and chapters in books or any combination of these types of publication. Papers must have been published either in established, refereed journals, in chapters in edited books or, when appropriate, may be in a professional journal held in high standing by academics and senior practitioners working in the field. The significance of artworks and performances must be demonstrated by the standing of the exhibition venue, the nature of commissioning process or the level of critical appraisal of the work.
- b) The Doctoral Statement should normally be of about 5000 words in length but can be longer (up to a maximum of 10,000 words) where the publications submitted do not address all key aspects of the research conducted.
- c) The Doctoral Statement should set out the proposed basis for the award of the degree, placing the work in its wider context, particularly drawing out linkages between the different pieces of work. It should demonstrate the required development or coherence in the work across the period covered by the publications and should incorporate a critical appraisal and discussion of the corpus.

187. Medical Sciences

- a) The submission should normally be based on at least four original articles in peer reviewed journals and must be based on work in which the candidate has had a major contribution.
- b) The submission should include an introductory section which reviews the relevant literature in the candidate's field of research and which puts his/her original observations into a broader scientific context. This should normally be at least 10,000 words in length and include a critical appraisal of what has been achieved.

198. Science, Agriculture and Engineering

- a) The submission should normally comprise of at least four original articles in peer reviewed journals and should represent a significant contribution to knowledge in the candidate's field.

~~Where the publications submitted have been jointly authored, additional information must be submitted detailing the contribution of the candidate to each. The number of publications should be increased pro-rata if jointly authored publications are submitted.~~

- b) The accompanying Doctoral Statement should normally be a minimum of 10,000 words. It should summarise the relevant literature, set the work carried out in its wider context, include a critical appraisal of what has been achieved and provide ideas for future work.