

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

*These regulations apply to all postgraduate students registered in academic year 2023/24 (or in the case of B. Research Masters' Degree Entrance Requirements, are applying during 2023/24).*

*These regulations will be understood in conjunction with requirements laid down in the General Regulations and the Examination Regulations of the University and will be read together with any examination regulations specific to the relevant programme, as approved by the relevant Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee.*

*Variations to the regulations, non-standard stage weightings and exceptions to the Qualifications and Credit Framework can only be agreed by University Education Committee (UEC), except where the power is explicitly vested in the relevant Faculty Education Committee (FEC), Degree Programme Director and/or Dean of Postgraduate Studies in the regulations themselves.*

*Where these regulations refer to Academic Unit, this is an overarching term for School and Institute.*

*Where reference is made in these regulations to any named University role, such references are to be read as including reference to their nominees.*

### A. Glossary of Terms

1. These regulations will apply to full-time and part-time Research Masters degree programmes, excluding MPhil programmes. Where the following terms appear they will have the meanings assigned below:

- a) **Assessment:** A set of processes that measure the students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes in terms of knowledge acquired, understanding developed, skills gained and attributes demonstrated. These assessments may include for example, written, aural and oral examinations, essays, poster or professional skills assessment, other course work, dissertations and practical activity;
- b) **Award:** A qualification awarded by the University on completion of a programme of study;
- c) **Class of award:** A means of distinguishing the achievement of different students of the intended learning outcomes of a programme. Postgraduate entry awards are classified as Pass, Pass with Merit or Pass with Distinction as defined in the University Common Scale for returning marks;
- d) **Compulsory module:** A module which a student, registered for a degree programme, is required to study;
- e) **Condoned fail:** A decision that a Level 7 module has been failed at the first attempt with a mark in the range 40 – 49, but that a pass on resit is not required in order to maintain eligibility for a Merit or Distinction on a classified programme;
- f) **Core module:** A module which students must pass, and in which a fail mark may neither be carried nor compensated; such modules are designated by the Board of Studies as essential for progression to a further stage of the programme or for

further study in a further module and will clearly be shown as core in the programme regulations;

- g) **Credit:** A quantitative measure of learning effort. The size of a module, measured by reference to student learning time so that for every 10 credits a student is expected to spend 100 hours in a combination of programmed activities, independent study and assessment;
- h) **Degree Programme Director:** A member of University academic staff who is responsible for the day-to-day management of a degree programme;
- i) **Degree programme Regulations:** The regulations approved by the University for a particular programme of study;
- j) **Dissertation:** An exercise in research or scholarship forming part of the student's programme of study;
- k) **Entry award:** The award for which a student is registered;
- l) **Exit award:** Awarded where a student does not satisfy the requirements for the award on which they are registered, but meets the requirements of an award with fewer credits (e.g., postgraduate certificate or a postgraduate diploma);
- m) **Module:** A discrete component of a programme of study that has stated intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning opportunities designed to achieve those outcomes and assessment tasks designed to enable students to demonstrate achievement of the outcomes. Modules are allocated credit values and have a defined level;
- n) **Non-modular aggregated assessment:** Assessment having the purpose of assessing a student's cross-modular understanding;
- o) **Postgraduate academic year:** An academic year from the first day of the first semester to two weeks before the start of the following academic year (i.e., September to September). Some programmes may have alternative start dates;
- p) **Postgraduate Certificate:** A programme or exit award comprising 60 credits in line with the University's Qualifications and Credit Framework, with at least 40 of at Level 7;
- q) **Postgraduate Diploma:** A programme or exit award comprising 120 credits in line with the University's Qualifications and Credit Framework, with at least 90 credits at Level 7;
- r) **Research Masters Degree programme:** A tailor-made programme that reflects specific research themes and aims incorporating, research preparation. A programme comprising at least 180 credits of which at least 80 credits will be dedicated to the research project/ dissertation, as outlined in the University's Qualifications and Credit Framework;
- s) **Stage:** A sub-division of a programme, for example into a taught element and a dissertation element, which, if present in a programme, must be clearly defined in the individual programme regulations. Where such stages are defined, the requirements relating to progression from one stage to the next must be stated in the programme regulations;
- t) **Taught element:** The remainder of the Research Master programme once the dissertation is excluded;

- u) **University Common Scale:** The scale for the return of marks as set out in V. Specific Progression and Classification Rules for Different Types of Taught Programme. The scale defines the range of marks to be given to represent degree classifications and is designed to ensure consistency and fairness to students across all modules.

## **B. Research Masters Degree Entrance Requirements**

2. Before being admitted to a Research Masters degree programme, you need to:
- a) Be a graduate of this or another approved University or degree-awarding body or holds other qualifications approved by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies; *and*
  - b) Satisfy such additional requirements for admission as may be set out in the relevant programme regulations or otherwise published by the University and approved by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

Where you do not satisfy the requirements above, a selector may nevertheless make a conditional or unconditional offer to you, subject to being satisfied that you are, or will be on achievement of any conditions stipulated in the offer, likely to succeed on the programme of study.

## **C. Preconditions for an Award**

3. Before being awarded a Research Masters degree, or the appropriate exit award, you must:
- a) Register for and make satisfactory progress in the relevant full-time or part-time programme of study as prescribed by the programme regulations; *and*
  - b) Satisfy the examiners under the relevant Assessment Regulations and the programme regulations;
  - c) Satisfy any conditions in the relevant programme regulations which define progress leading to the dissertation element of the programme.

## **D. Patterns of Study**

4. The standard pattern of study and the number of stages for an award will be as prescribed in *The Qualifications and Credit Framework* and the relevant programme regulations. Exceptions to the *Qualifications and Credit Framework* can only be agreed by the University Education Committee.

5. A Degree Programme Director has the discretion to permit you to commence the programme at the start of Semester 2 and complete the programme in the following academic year.

6. At the discretion of the Degree Programme Director, you may be permitted to transfer from full-time to part-time study (and vice versa). This is subject to specific arrangements being agreed by the Degree Programme Director to accommodate the part-time study pattern and should be reported to the Board of Studies and Graduate School. This is also subject to you having appropriate immigration status. International students should seek advice from the [Visa Team](#). Part-time students will be required to pass each stage of the part-time programme.

7. The Degree Programme Directors of both programmes may permit you to transfer programme during the academic year, provided there is significant overlap in the modules previously studied.

8. Where a transfer is considered for a Student Visa holder, you should be aware that a further visa application may be required as part of the process. You should seek guidance from the Visa Team.

9. All transfers will be reported to relevant Schools and the Graduate School. All transfer arrangements are subject to you having the appropriate immigration status. International students should seek advice from the [Visa Team](#).

10. You may select modules other than those prescribed in your degree programme regulations with permission from your Degree Programme Director. However, such permission cannot override the provisions of 'III Progress Regulations for Taught Programmes - B Module Registration' or the requirements of the [Qualification and Credit Framework](#). In exercising this power, the Degree Programme Director will take account of relevant credit transfer or recognition of prior learning, the requirements of accrediting bodies, fairness within the cohort and the level and relevance to the programme of any alternative module selected. All such variations will be reported to the School and Graduate School.

11. You will not be permitted to select modules of more than 70 credits in either semester one or semester two. However, a Degree Programme Director may also approve exceptional variations to this standard, taking into account the workload implications and on the understanding that the student is fully aware of the consequences.

12. You will not be permitted to register for a module that is a substitution for a module previously studied.

## **E. General Provisions Governing Attendance and Academic Progress**

### Length of Study

13. If you are a full-time student, you are normally expected to complete the programme in 1 year. If you are a part-time student, you are normally expected to complete the programme in 2 years.

14. Where there are no programme-specific regulations regarding length of study, the maximum time for you to complete is 4 years.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress

15. You are required to make satisfactory academic progress in your programme of study and, during each semester, your academic progress in all modules will be reviewed by the Degree Programme Director.

16. Failure to make satisfactory academic progress may be grounds for:

- a) Further monitoring of your progress, or requiring the submission of written work in addition to that required by the programme regulations, where there is a clear academic rationale;
- b) Delay of your attempt at the whole assessment for the module(s) concerned to the August/September resit examinations, or equivalent resit period, in the

same academic year. Where such a delay is imposed, the attempt will count as the second attempt;

- c) Suspension or termination of your programme of study.

#### Evidence of Failure to make Satisfactory Academic Progress

17. Any of the following may constitute failure to make satisfactory academic progress:

- a) Failure to attend for interview with your Personal Tutor, Degree Programme Director or other academic staff as required in connection with failure to attend your programme of study or failure to make satisfactory academic progress ([Personal Tutoring Framework – Learning and Teaching Development Service Policies](#));
- b) Failure to attend regularly your programme of study without good cause;
- c) Failure to perform adequately, or satisfy the examiners, in work prescribed for your programme of study;
- d) Failure to submit written work required under your programme regulations (whether or not such work counts for assessment purposes) at the required time;
- e) Failure to attend examinations or pass the prescribed examinations for your programme; provisional examination results may be used as such evidence;
- f) Failure to attend as required for dissertation supervision, failure to submit evidence of progress as required by your Research Dissertation Supervisor or to submit your dissertation by the date stipulated;
- g) Failure to attend English language assessment and attend in-sessional English language classes as directed by your Degree Programme Director;
- h) Failure to attend or complete satisfactorily an INTO pre-sessional programme;
- i) Failure to attend briefings relating to health and safety, especially as they apply to laboratory work, and to pass any assessments in relation to these briefings that are designed to ensure that you are safe to operate in that environment;
- j) If you are an international student who is in breach of your visa conditions, please refer to General Regulations I33-34.

*You are expected to acquaint yourself with the attendance and submission requirements for lectures, seminars, tutorials, practicals, laboratory work, language classes, performances, fieldwork and examinations as well as with dissertation supervisions for your programme of study.*

#### Procedure for Review of Academic Progress

18. If after review, the Degree Programme Director determines you have not made sufficient academic progress, you will be notified in writing of the reasons for this, invited to make a written response and given the opportunity of an interview with your Degree Programme Director. Following this notice and any interview, and taking account of all known circumstances, your Degree Programme Director may:

- a) take further action under regulation E16a or b;

- b) take further action under regulation E16 c in consultation with the appropriate Dean of Postgraduate Studies, provided that you were invited to attend an interview, including notice that the suspension or termination of your programme was likely to be considered, and advised to bring details of any medical or personal circumstances (with evidence) relevant to your academic progress.

#### Appeals against Actions resulting from Review of Academic Progress

19. You may appeal against action taken under regulation E16 by submitting a Level 1 Academic Query under the [Academic Queries and Appeals procedure](#) within 14 calendar days of the written notification of the action.

20. Even though discussion and correspondence with you regarding lack of academic progress may be ongoing, the University may be obliged to report you to the Home Office, if you are an International student who has failed to attend timetabled taught sessions. The report to the Home Office may necessitate termination of your studies at the University under General Regulation I34.

#### **F. Study Undertaken Outside the University**

21. You may be permitted by your Degree Programme Director on the recommendation of your Research Dissertation Supervisor, to study outside the University (or an approved campus) for more than one month. You should normally seek approval three months in advance of the start of the period of outside study, where possible, and the Degree Programme Director should be satisfied before the beginning of the period of study that:

- a) you will have access to adequate facilities, resources and appropriate research training;
- b) you will have sufficient time available for study and research;
- c) appropriate arrangements have been made for your supervision and progress monitoring during the period of study outside the University, including arrangements for your Research Dissertation Supervisor to maintain contact with and to meet with you, in accordance with requirements stated in the Code of Practice for Research Degree programmes and as often as is necessary;
- d) appropriate arrangements have been made in any case where you are attached to or working at an institution outside the University and are offered local supervision and support by staff at that institution;
- e) any relevant health and safety issues have been considered and approved by the Head of Academic Unit in line with University guidelines and University Insurance policies.

All approvals should be reported to the School and the Graduate School.

All study visits, of any duration to high-risk location must also be signed off by the Degree Programme Director, or Faculty PVC under certain circumstances (more information is available in the [Guidance for Postgraduate Student Travel](#)).

*Notes:*

*(i) that periods of study outside the University of less than one month should be agreed within a student's Academic Unit and you should complete a Student Notice of Absence form.*

*(ii) that if you are permitted to undertake part of your study outside of the University you are still required to:*

- *pay the standard fees whilst within candidature, unless alternative arrangements were approved as part of the admission process;*
- *have your attendance monitored on the programme;*
- *adhere to your deadline for research dissertation submission, unless an extension or interruption of studies has been agreed as part of the outside study approval.*

*(iii) that it is unlikely that that an outside study request will be approved in the month before your research dissertation submission deadline.*

*Notes for Student Visa Holders*

*(iv) you are required to inform the University if you are away from Newcastle (or approved campus) as a condition of your visa sponsorship.*

*(v) if you leave the UK to write-up in your home country or elsewhere, you will normally have your visa curtailed.*

## **G. Assessment**

22. There is one final mark for each module but, where module outlines so specify, you may be required to meet a prescribed threshold in specific 'essential' components of a module in order to be deemed to have passed the module overall. The module outline must indicate components for which such thresholds apply and must make clear the consequence of failing to meet the threshold: either failure in the module with a fail mark returned, or a deferred pass in which the component failure may be redeemed as part of the same attempt without any increase in the original mark. In addition, module outlines may specify 'zero weighted pass/fail assessments', i.e., assessments that do not contribute to the module mark but that must be passed in order to pass the module.

23. The modes of assessment permitted will be those specified in the degree programme regulations, programme specifications, module specifications and handbook. Where the assessment does not take the form of written examinations, rules to be observed by you (for example, in relation to the size, form and submission dates for examinable coursework or dissertations, and including rules governing the arrangements for the retention and recall of assessed work) will be those specified in the degree programme handbook.

24. Any late submission of an assessment or dissertation will be considered in line with the University's Submission of Work Policy [Submission of Work Policy](#).

## **H. Provisions for Interruption/Suspension of Progress**

25. The University reserves the right to suspend or terminate your studies. This will generally be in accordance with normal academic regulations or student procedures noted within University Regulations.

26. In such cases you will have the right to appeal under the Academic Queries and Appeals procedure.

### Exclusion for Delayed Progress

27. a) If you are a full-time student following a one-year programme and you are more than one year overdue;
- b) If you are a full-time student following a programme longer than one year and you are more than two years overdue; *or*
- c) If you are a part-time student who is more than two years overdue.

You will automatically be excluded from further study unless given express permission by the Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee. The Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee will be advised by the Degree Programme Director on any quality and accreditation issues relevant your programme and on whether you have met the learning outcomes of the programme as currently delivered. The Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee will specifically consider the needs of disabled students where the disability leads to delays in progress and take into account any recommendations from the Student Health and Wellbeing Service along with any recommendations arising from the Support to Study Procedure.

### Permission for Interruption of Normal Progress

28. Subject to Regulation 27 above, the Degree Programme Director may give you permission to interrupt normal progress within the programme.

### Resumption of Normal Progress

29. When you resume normal progress, you will be entitled to proceed with your programme of study only under the regulations then applicable to the next and remaining stages of the programme. Any variation in module selection made necessary by the interruption will be considered as set out in Section D (Patterns of Study), with Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee approval required if assessments need to be varied or set aside.

### Permission to Repeat Tuition

30. You will only be permitted to repeat a period of tuition with the express approval of the Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee. The Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee may also consider the setting aside of previous assessment attempts (see Regulation L44). You will be required to pay tuition fees for any additional period of registration.

### Assessment Requirements for Students Returning after an Interruption/Suspension of Study

31. Where you are permitted by the Degree Programme Director to interrupt your programme of study at any time during a stage, or following a period of imposed suspension of study, and are required to resume those studies at the same point during a subsequent academic year, any assessments completed prior to the date of interruption will be carried forward to the end of that stage. The Degree Programme Director may approve variations to the normal pattern of study where your programme has changed.

## **J. Supervisory Arrangements**

32. The University requires that individual supervisors are appointed for the research project/dissertation element of your programme. This should normally be undertaken by a member of academic staff, who should be demonstrably research active and on



the approved research supervisors list for the Academic Unit or Faculty. You should always have a second named person acting as advisor, either an additional disciplinary expert, the Degree Programme Director or School PGR Director.

*Note: The [Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes](#) provides details on changes to supervisory teams and on appropriate supervisory support for research students.*

## **K. Applications from Members of Staff of the University**

33. If you are a member of staff of the University, you may apply to undertake a part-time postgraduate programme in order to enhance your ability to carry out your current or agreed future work within the University provided that you hold an appointment which extends to cover the prescribed period of registration for your programme.

34. The relevance of the chosen programme to your employment at the University (or agreed future work) of the member of staff will be determined by the relevant Head of Academic Unit/Service and Dean of Postgraduate Studies (or relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor in the case of staff who are not attached to faculties) before your academic suitability is considered by the relevant Degree Programme Director. Appeals against the decision of the Head of Academic Unit and Dean of Postgraduate Studies (or Pro-Vice-Chancellor) concerning the relevance of the programme will be determined by the Chair of the Staff Committee.

35. As a member of staff, you may be permitted to register for a postgraduate programme in your own Academic Unit, but in such a case all your work must be externally assessed.

36. If you are a member of staff registered for a postgraduate programme you will not normally be permitted to teach or examine in any aspect of the programme or to take part in discussion relating to the assessment of students in the programme.

## **L. Examination Committee**

37. An Examination Committee will be appointed for each award-bearing programme. An Examination Committee may be responsible for a number of programmes. Membership of an Examination Committee will include the relevant Degree Programme Director(s), named representatives of the main areas of study involved in the programmes and the appointed External Examiners. The membership of each Examination Committee will be agreed by the relevant Board of Studies and names of the Chair and Secretary reported to the appropriate Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee.

### **Chair of the Examination Committee**

38. The Chair is responsible for conducting all meetings of the committee, and for ensuring that all decisions are taken by the committee in the full knowledge of all the performances for each student. In appropriate cases, the Examination Committee may delegate to the chair the right to consider and make decisions. In so doing, the chair should consult as many members of the committee as possible (including the internal and external examiners). Action taken by the Chair must be reported to the next scheduled meeting of the examination committee. The Chair will exercise discretion only in a manner consistent with the normal practices and any additional agreed principles of the committee. All agreed mark sheets, confirming decisions taken by the Examination Committee, will be signed by the Chair.

### **Secretary**

39. The Examination Committee will appoint a Secretary who will be responsible for ensuring that all Examiners and Examination Committee Members are informed of meetings. The Secretary will also be responsible for keeping a record of all decisions reached by the committee. In all cases of the exercise of discretion, the reason for the decision will be recorded.

### **Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Committee**

40. A Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee will be appointed by each Examination Committee to review and consider medical and mitigating circumstances which may have an effect on your performance. One Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee can cover a number of programmes. This committee will normally consist of the Chair and Secretary of the Examinations Committee and two other senior members of academic staff, one of whom should be selected from outside of the academic unit. If the Secretary is not a member of academic staff, then a fourth senior member of academic staff must be appointed to the committee. The Chair of the PEC committee will report the Committee's recommendations, including a summary of action taken throughout the year by the Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee, members and delegated staff, to the Chair of the Examination Committee.

41. If your academic performance is seriously affected by medical or personal circumstances, and you would like to request some adjustment to take account of this, you should submit a Personal Extenuating Circumstance Form in line with the [Personal Extenuating Circumstance policy](#).

42. The Examination Committee will, accordingly, be made aware if medical or other circumstances have been put forward by you; however, no more detail than is necessary will be disclosed, and this will include no personal or medical details. All personal information will be handled by the Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee and the Examination Committee in accordance with the requirements of data protection legislation. (*Guidance on [Personal Extenuating Circumstances procedure](#) is provided by the Student Progress Service.*)

43. You will be reminded annually by notice (in electronic or paper form) of the Personal Extenuating Circumstances procedure and reminded that applications should be made by in a timely manner. If you fail to disclose relevant circumstances to the Committee at the time of impact, this may lead to no adjustment being made to take account of the personal extenuating circumstances.

44. The Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee will have the power to grant the following, subject to the appropriate evidence being provided for or by the student;

- a) Extensions within and beyond those permitted as part of the Submission of Work policy;
- b) Exemptions from minor elements of assessed work (normally a maximum of 20% of the module in question);
- c) Deferral of a formal examination or assessment attempt to the next normal occasion;

- d) Deferral of a formal examination or assessment attempt to a later normal occasion;
- e) Extraordinary examinations, including those outside of the regular assessment periods;
- f) Setting aside previous attempt(s) at a module, stage or semester and allowing repeat tuition if required;
- g) Allowing you to retake a module, semester or stage with tuition (subject to payment of the appropriate tuition fees);
- h) Allowing you to proceed to the next Stage of a programme carrying fails;  
and
- i) To provide the Examination Committee with an assessment of the scope and severity of mitigating circumstances affecting a student, which have not been addressed by a-h above (i.e., to recommend the use of discretion).

A PEC Committee may, on occasion, need to consider other adjustments in response to your personal extenuating circumstance case. Adjustments other than those listed in Regulation 44 a - i above must be approved by the appropriate Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

### **M. Absence from Examinations, Failure to Submit Assessed Work and Academic Misconduct**

45. Where you have been absent without formal approval from an examination, a mark of zero will be returned for that component of the assessment. Where you have failed to submit any other element of the assessment, a mark of zero will be returned for that element. Any late submissions must be considered in line with the University's [Submission of Work Policy](#).

46. Where you have failed to comply with any other assessment requirement, the consequence, if any, stipulated in the programme or module handbook will apply.

47. The University's procedure for academic misconduct will apply to any reported or suspected cheating or plagiarism. It should be clear that sanctions imposed under the [Assessment Misconduct Procedure](#) take precedent over the Examination Committee, and therefore cannot be overturned.

### **N. Marking Procedures**

48. All examiners should carry out assessments in accordance with the published assessment criteria available in programme handbooks.

49. In line with the University's [Policy and Guidance on Moderation and Scaling](#) the following will constitute the procedure and, where appropriate, minimum requirements, for marking throughout the University.

- a) All marking will be guided by the marking criteria, which will be published in the degree programme handbook.
- b) Each Examination Committee will have a written Moderation and Scaling policy which should comply with the University's guidance.

- c) When coursework is submitted late but remains eligible for a capped mark, the mark that would have been awarded had the work been submitted on time must be recorded and must be available to the Examination Committee, if required.

## P. Assessments and Conduct of Examinations

50. You must follow the rules governing the conduct of University examinations published by the Academic Registrar (<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/exams/rules/>). Alternative arrangements may be made for students with permanent or temporary disabilities in accordance with the [Student Health and Wellbeing Assessment and Examination Provision](#).

51. If you register for a module or other programme of study, you automatically register for the related assessment.

52. You are required to present yourself for all components of an examination for which you have entered. If you fail to attend, you will be subject to the terms of the Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes, except where the consideration of an 'aegrotat' degree is appropriate. (See Section KK: Aegrotat for definition.)

53. You are expected to retain all forms of assessed work returned to you after marking. Assessed work so retained may be recalled from students, if required by external examiners or for examination review purposes, or for quality assessment or audit purposes. Rules governing the arrangements for the retention of assessed work are specified in the [Policy on Disclosure of Marks and Return of Assessed Work](#).

54. Any examination invigilator will, on finding an irregularity in your conduct in the examination room, warn you of the nature of the suspected irregularity, confiscate any illicit material, and tell you that a report of this event will be made in writing to the Chair of the Examination Committee and to the Academic Registrar.

55. If your examination script, or other work submitted for assessment contains the unacknowledged work of another, either verbatim or in substance, or contains fabricated research results, or is found to be a case of self-plagiarism, you will be subject to the University's [Academic Misconduct Procedure](#).

At an academic misconduct interview you may be asked questions similar to a viva on your work to establish the ownership of the work

56. For the purposes of determining the number of attempts which a candidate may have for an examination, an extraordinary examination or approved deferral, counts as the same attempt as the examination for which it was granted.

## R. Return of Marks

57. The mark for each module on a Research Masters degree programme, postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate must be returned to the Examination Committee and disclosed to you using the University Common Scale for the return of marks below:

	<b>Marking scale applicable to level 7 modules and master's programmes</b>	<b>Marking scale applicable to modules below level 7</b>	<b>Marking scale applicable to postgraduate certificate and diploma programmes</b>
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0-39	Fail	Fail	Fail
40-49	Fail	Pass	Fail
50-59	Pass	Pass	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit	Pass with Merit	Pass
70-100	Pass with Distinction	Pass with Distinction	Pass

58. The final mark returned for the assessment of any module, will be rounded to the nearest whole number on the marking scale.

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

### **S. Releasing and Adjusting Marks**

60. Marks awarded for coursework and examinations will be disclosed to you as soon as they are available and within 20 working days. It should be made clear to you that the marks are provisional marks only and will be subject to review, and to possible moderation.

### **T. Credits Required and Using Credit Value**

61. You are required to study 60 credits for a postgraduate certificate, 120 credits for a postgraduate diploma and 180 credits for a Research Masters degree in line with the requirements outlined in the University's *Qualifications and Credit Framework*. All modules of a programme contribute towards the final award and its classification. The weighting of modules for assessment purposes will correspond to the credit value of the module specified in the relevant programme regulations. Such weighting of modules may be adjusted in accordance with any programme regulations only to allow for additional weighting allocated to non-modular aggregated assessment.

### **U. Progression within Research Masters Programmes**

62. Where there are progression requirements specified in the programme regulations, you must, before proceeding from one stage to another, satisfy the examiners in the assessment for each module of that stage. This may require your profile of modules to be considered by the Chair of the Examination Committee prior to being allowed to progress to the research dissertation.

### **V. Reassessment**

63. If you pass a module, including by discretion, you cannot be reassessed for any component of that module.

64. If you fail modules you are entitled to one reassessment for each taught module failed at the first attempt provided that: no more than 40 credits of the taught element of the programme are failed at the first attempt.

65. The deeming of a first attempt failure on a module as a 'condoned fail' in W70b does not remove the right to reassessment. If you have one or more modules deemed to be condoned fails, you may still undertake reassessment in those modules either for the purpose of improving your transcript or the purpose of improving your overall average (calculated as prescribed in X72).

66. The form of the reassessment at any stage may vary from the original, at the discretion of the Board of Studies. The Board of Studies may delegate this authority to the Examination Committee, but if you are to be reassessed you must be informed of the style of the reassessment to be adopted, including identification of various assessment components and weightings. Changes to the format of assessment must apply to the whole cohort.

67. If you fail more than 40 credits at the first attempt of the taught element of the programme you will not normally be permitted to continue or be reassessed without the explicit consent of the Examination Committee.

68. If you are entitled to a second attempt, you will automatically be entered for failed modules (and any failed non-modular aggregated assessments) at the next available occasion of assessment (normally in August/September of the same academic year as the first attempt) or at an alternative occasion designated by the Examination Committee. The timing of any reassessment will be such that your progression is not unduly delayed. The Examination Committee may stipulate a period for reassessment which is outside the University's normal assessment and resit periods.

## **W. Principles of Discretion**

69. The Examination Committee has the discretion to override the normal regulations to pass you, in the whole (or any part) of the assessment, at any stage. Your case will be considered on its own merits, but students in similar circumstances must be treated in a consistent manner, however, discretion must not be used to your disadvantage.

70. Despite your student's results, while taking account of any requirements for professional accreditation, the Examination Committee may, in its ultimate discretion (and where applicable):

- a) Deem you to have passed specific modules – including core modules,
- b) Deem first attempt failures on one or more Level 7 modules on a classified programme to be 'condoned fails', provided that:
  - i. You have passed all other taught modules.
  - ii. The relevant marks are in the range 40 – 49, and
  - iii. You do not accumulate more than 20 credits in condoned fails (10 credits for students registered for a Postgraduate Certificate).

A condoned fail will be treated as a fail for the purposes of Regulations V64 – V67, but a condoned fail will not diminish eligibility for a Merit or Distinction under Regulation AA81. In such circumstances you will retain the right to a second attempt at the module, subject to the provision of Section V Reassessment.

- c) Make you an award or a higher award, or decide on a higher degree classification, subject to any restriction specified elsewhere in the regulations.

71. Where the Examination Committee exercises discretion the reasons for the decision must be recorded in the minutes. The reasons for exercising or not exercising discretion will be recorded in the minutes of the proceedings in every case where the exercise of discretion is considered, both those where such consideration is required under Regulation AA81 - 82 or where it is considered on other grounds. The minutes will record the issues raised and the decisions reached, whilst maintaining, wherever possible, the anonymity of Examination Committee members contributing to the debate. Chairs of Examination Committees 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 Postgraduate Research Committees for review.

## **X. Use of Marks after Reassessment or Discretion**

72. Where you have achieved a passing mark following reassessment or have been deemed to have passed in an assessment by the exercise of discretion, the actual (uncapped) module mark achieved by you, using the normal University scale, will be shown on the transcript, with an appropriate note if discretion has been applied, and a statement that a mark of 50 will be used in any calculations. However, in such cases, the Examination Committee may, in its ultimate discretion, have regard to the actual module mark obtained at the second occasion of assessment. Where you fail a module after reassessment, the better of the two marks for the module will be used in calculations.

## **Y. Nature of the Dissertation Examination**

73. The examination will consist of a review and assessment of your research dissertation (and where appropriate other artefacts) by one Internal and one External Examiner nominated by the Head of Academic Unit and appointed by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

You may be required to take an oral examination in addition to submitting a research dissertation.

74. A member of the Supervisory Team will not be appointed as an Internal Examiner. Where the University is unable to appoint an Internal Examiner a second External Examiner will be appointed.

75. The Examiners will determine whether or not you should be examined orally. The normal practice will be that an oral examination is only convened when the External Examiner contacts the Graduate School to request an oral examination. Such a request will be considered by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies. If approved, the Research Dissertation Supervisor will be asked to co-ordinate the arrangements.

76. In all cases where two External Examiners are appointed and an oral examination is required by the examiners, the Dean of Postgraduate Studies will also appoint an independent member of University staff who will chair the oral examination. In all cases where the Dean of Postgraduate Studies has determined that an Independent Chair is required, where possible the independent chair should normally be from outside your subject area. (*The [Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes](#) provides further details in the section, 'Criteria for Appointment of Examiners'*).

77. Where an oral examination is held, the purpose of such an examination is to enable the examiners to:

- a) establish that the research has been undertaken by you;
- b) test your ability to defend your work;
- c) establish whether you have a satisfactory knowledge of the wider field surrounding the research topic.

78. If an oral examination is required, your Research Dissertation Supervisor may, at your request, be present during the oral examination but will make no contribution to the examination. However, in all cases, the Research Dissertation Supervisor should be available to be consulted by the Examiners on the occasion of the oral examination and will have the right to confer with the examiners on request.

79. In examining your research dissertation, the Examiners should take into consideration both the extent and merit of the work submitted and the quality of the exposition. With regard to the extent of the work, the examiners should satisfy themselves that your work shows evidence of adequate industry and application. With regard to the merit of the work, you are expected to show distinct ability in conducting research investigations and in testing ideas, whether your own or others'. The exposition of the work in the research dissertation must be clear and must show that you understand the relationship of the work embodied in the research dissertation and the theme of that work to a wider field of knowledge.

## **Z. Recommendations Open to the Examiners**

80. Following submission and examination of your research dissertation, the examiners should return an agreed mark and make one of the following recommendations:

- a) That you be awarded the relevant Research Masters degree;
- b) That you be allowed to revise and resubmit your research dissertation, normally within a period of six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made. The revised research dissertation will be examined by your Internal Examiner;
- c) That the Research Masters degree is not awarded and that you be returned to the Examination Committee for consideration of a postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate.

## **AA. The Award and Classification of Research Masters Degrees**

81. You are entitled, as of right, for the award of an appropriate Research Masters degree if all the requirements for the award are met and all the modules in the degree 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 Research Masters degree or Postgraduate Diploma, provided that the weighted average mark for all modules and all non-modular aggregated assessment (taking credit values into account) is at least 50. In classified programmes, you will be eligible as of right only for the award of a pass only; you would be entitled to a Merit or Distinction, as indicated by your final programme average, only 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 to a student failing up to 10 credits of non-core modules.

82. The class of your award is determined as follows and returned to the Graduate School by the Examination Committee:

- a) You are entitled to the class of degree yielded by the final programme average for all modules and all non-modular aggregated assessment taking credit values into account.
- b) If you have a final programme average within two marks (after rounding of marks) of a class boundary, you will always be considered for the next higher class of award, taking account of:
  - i. The overall profile of individual marks achieved in modules;
  - ii. Exceptional performance in the research dissertation, as recommended by the examiners;
  - iii. Progressive improvement in your performance
- c) The Examination Committee when considering the exercise of discretion, will also take into account any recommendation from the Personal Extenuating Circumstance Committee on the effect and scope of Medical or other mitigating circumstances affecting you that were submitted to the Personal Extenuating Circumstance Committee.

However, the Examination Committee are not limited to this category of student when considering the use of discretion.

### **BB. Award of a Postgraduate Diploma (exit award)**

83. If you are a Research Masters degree student and fail to meet the criteria for the Research Masters degree, you can be recommended for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma by the Examination Committee:

- a) Where there is an associated Postgraduate Diploma, this may be awarded using the criteria laid down in those regulations;
- b) Where there are no associated regulations, a Postgraduate Diploma may be awarded to if you have achieved an average mark of at least 50 over the course of 120 credits, which may include the dissertation element.

84. If you are not entitled to a Postgraduate Diploma as of right, you may be recommended for a postgraduate diploma by the Examination Committee, using its ultimate discretion under Regulations W69 - 71.

85. The award of a Postgraduate Diploma as an exit award is not classified.

### **CC. Award of a Postgraduate Certificate (exit award)**

86. If you are a Research Masters degree or Postgraduate Diploma student, who fails to meet the criteria for the Research Masters degree or Postgraduate Diploma, you can be recommended for the award of Postgraduate Certificate by the Examination Committee:

- a) Where there is an associated Postgraduate Certificate, this may be awarded using the criteria laid down in those regulations;
- b) Where there are no associated regulations, a Postgraduate Certificate may be awarded if you have achieved an average mark of at least 50 over the course of 60 credits.

87. If you are not entitled to a Postgraduate Certificate as of right, you may be recommended for a Postgraduate Certificate by the Examination Committee, using its ultimate discretion, under Regulations W69 - 71.

88. The award of a Postgraduate Certificate as an exit award is not classified.

### **DD. Minor Revisions or Corrections**

89. Where resubmission of the research dissertation is required, you will normally be required to make the revisions within six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

90. In exceptional cases, an extension of time for making the corrections may be granted by the appropriate Degree Programme Director, subject to you presenting a case justifying such an extension, supported by your Research Dissertation Supervisor. Any extensions should be notified to the School and Graduate School.

91. It will be the expectation that the research dissertation will not require referral back to the External Examiner and that you will not be expected to undergo a further oral examination. However, if the Internal Examiner feels that it is appropriate following reconsideration of the research dissertation after the revisions have been made, the Internal E External Examiner. Where a research dissertation is thus referred to the External Examiner, the examiners may determine that a further oral examination is required.

### **EE. Recommendations After Resubmission of the Dissertation for Re-examination by the Internal Examiner**

92. Where you have been permitted to revise and resubmit a research dissertation the options open to the examiners when re-examining the research dissertation will be those set out in Regulations 80a or 80c only.

### **FF. Provision of Information about Revisions Required**

93. In all cases where you are required to make revisions to a research dissertation, it will be the responsibility of the examiners to provide full details of the corrections and/or revisions required. The Examiners will provide you and your Research Dissertation Supervisor, as soon as possible after the examination, with a written statement of the nature of the changes they wish to see made to the research dissertation. The Examiners should also attach a copy of this statement to their final report which the Graduate School will share with you and your Research Dissertation Supervisor. When forwarding the final report to the you, it will be made clear to you that resubmission will not guarantee the award of a qualification.

### **GG. Communication of the Result**

94. In any case where an examiner chooses to give you an informal indication as to the recommendation that will be put forward, the examiner concerned must stress that the recommendation is subject to ratification. Only the Graduate School or the Exams Office, on behalf of the Academic Registrar is empowered to issue the official result and provide notification of this to you.

### **HH. Disagreement between the Examiners**

95. If there is a disagreement between the Examiners of the research dissertation where possible they will initially collaborate to resolve the matter. Where there is

irreconcilable disagreement between the Examiners an additional independent External Examiner will be appointed.

96. The additional Examiner will be told that the original Examiners have failed to reach agreement but will not have sight of their report. The additional External Examiner will be asked to read the student's research dissertation and decide whether an oral examination is required. If there is to be an oral examination the student's Research Dissertation Supervisor (and where appropriate the Internal Examiner) will be available to be consulted by the additional External Examiner. The Dean of Postgraduate Studies will appoint a member of University staff as an Independent Chair, who will report on the conduct of the oral examination, if required. The additional External Examiner's recommendation will be final. They will submit a final report to the relevant Graduate School which will, subject to the approval of the relevant Examinations Committee, be forwarded to you and your Research Dissertation Supervisor in the normal way.

97. Where an additional External Examiner has been appointed, you will be informed of this and whether another oral examination is required. You will not be informed as to the nature of the disagreement and will not be given a copy of their report. If, however, you subsequently appeal against the final decision in respect of the award of the degree, the report of the original Examiners will form part of the formal record of appeal. Once a decision as to the award of the degree has been made the final report of the additional External Examiner will be made available to you and your Research Dissertation Supervisor.

98. In the event that recommendation 80b is made, that is, *admission to the degree subject to revisions being made within six months*, the revisions will be subject to the satisfaction of the additional External Examiner.

## **JJ. Mid-year Student Withdrawals**

99. If you withdraw from the University during the academic year, you will be considered for the appropriate exit award at the next scheduled meeting of the Examination Committee.

## **KK. Aegrotat**

100. The Examination Committee may award an aegrotat degree to a student who has demonstrated postgraduate ability typically over at least 50% of the programme on which they are registered, but who presents sufficient evidence of ill health or other extenuating circumstances such that, in the judgement of the Examination Committee, there is no reasonable possibility that then student can complete the programme.

101. When considering the option of making this award, the Examination Committee 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 Examination Committee should consider the appropriateness of awarding an appropriate exit award.

102. A student to whom an aegrotat is awarded shall be deemed to have obtained the award but without classification.

103. The Examination Committee shall have the power to award a degree posthumously.

