Guidance for Boards of Examiners
Of Taught Programmes

Academic year 2012-13

Prepared by the Regulations Sub-Committee of ULTSEC

Any comments or suggestions about this document would be appreciated, and should be sent to the Student Progress Service at casework@ncl.ac.uk.

It is compulsory for any new chair or secretary to attend the University’s Board of Examiners training. Refresher training sessions are also available for existing board members. Information about this training is available through the Staff Development Unit website www.ncl.ac.uk/staffdev/

It is essential that Boards of Examiners comply with any University or programme-specific regulations for student progression. This document is intended to provide additional notes and advice on arrangements for Boards and does not seek to replace the regulations. In the event of any divergence of view, the regulations must have primacy.

All University regulations are available on the University website www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations. Advice on interpreting the regulations is also available from the Student Progress Service.
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1. Ownership of module marks and results

General Principles

a) Each module should have a school and a primary Board of Examiners. For example, a mathematics module may be widely available to students/programmes across the campus, but would nevertheless have a primary home within the School of Mathematics & Statistics, and a significant proportion of the students on the module are likely to be associated with a programme within that School. This is a broad generalisation, and there are some exceptions, but the principle is that each module should have a ‘home’ school/Board which will have ownership of the marks and, once reviewed, will release these marks to other Boards of Examiners.

b) Arrangements for ‘owning’, reviewing and releasing module results can vary. However, it is recommended good practice that all schools / Boards of Examiners consider holding Module Moderation Boards to review marks by module (to assess scaling, confirm that there is no cohort bias, etc.). These are generally internal meetings without External Examiners.

c) Module Moderation Boards function in effect as primary Boards of Examiners, and so such meetings should normally include the Chair of the Board of Examiners (or Chairs if there is more than one Board in the School) and key, experienced, members of staff. In practice there may need to be more than one of these Boards through the Semester 1 and Semester 2 examination periods.

d) Timing of Module Moderation Boards is critical. Some modules – e.g. mathematics and language modules — are available to numerous programmes. Internal marks for shared modules must be released as soon as possible so that the decision-making process of Boards of Examiners is not compromised. Where the modules are not shared (i.e. relate to programmes within the school), a Module Moderation Board could meet immediately before the Board of Examiners, with Externals present.

e) Note: External Examiners can moderate scripts, etc., and this can result in amendments to marks and this may take place as a result of sampling in advance of the Board of Examiners. External Examiners are expected to be involved in moderation at module and degree programme level, but this must take place in advance of the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

f) Marks returned by Module Leaders may subsequently be moderated by the Module Moderation Boards.

2. Prohibition on Adjustment of Marks

The University Guidance on Moderation and Scaling is available at www.ncl.ac.uk/quilt/assets/documents/qsh-assmt-moderation-guidance.pdf

Undergraduate Examination Convention G31
Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions G31

a) Supplementary notes: Subsequent to moderation procedures (see above) marks cannot be changed (other than to correct an error or to reflect External Examiner moderation).

b) The process of moderation or standardisation requires that the procedures leading to the construction of the final set of module marks is valid, reasonable and fair, ensuring that the final return mark is based on a secure judgement. In addition, it must address the issue of the whether the final return marks are those consistent with the University’s Degree Classification (DC) scale and the relevant descriptors for the levels to be achieved in the programme, particularly noting the performances and corresponding return marks at the various classification boundaries. Any perceived mismatch between the judgement of the examiners and the final return marks may be addressed by suitably scaling the marks. This might involve all marks being scaled upwards on a particular element of the assessment (because the assessment was perceived to be too difficult), or downwards (because too easy), or some
combination across the mark range (because the examination was too difficult for weak candidates and too easy for the better ones). Note that any scaling is applied to each element of the assessment, and not to the final overall mark. Any scaling must be described and justified; similarly, marks that might look out-of-line, and have not been scaled, require a rationale for not changing them. These issues would normally be debated at the meeting of the Module Moderation Board, but can be discussed by all the examiners and checkers for the module, probably with some guidance from the Chair of the Board of Examiners. (To aid this process, it might be useful to have available a set of guidance or reference statistics for the cohort.)

  c) External examiners may play a role similar to that of the internal examiners (and in some subjects this may be the norm), resulting in recommendations as described in the previous paragraph. However, this must be directed only at cohorts of students taking a particular module (and then only to specific elements of the assessment). Under no circumstances should any examiners, internal or external, recommend changes to individual students’ marks (other than to correct errors); adjustments must be applied to the whole cohort, on some rational and defensible basis.

  d) No Board of Examiners can amend marks.

  e) The errors that can be corrected after marks are returned to the Board include those made in the calculation and recording of marks. They do not include errors of judgement made during the standardisation process that are highlighted during the Board meeting. This convention means, for example, that it is not possible for the Board to change a mark from 39 to 40 in order that an Undergraduate student passes the stage or is awarded an Honours degree by right.

  f) When the School/Board that owns the module discovers an error, the protocol is that the School should amend the marks and advise, in writing, each relevant Chair of the Board of Examiners and School Administrator of the changes. For example: if an error is discovered in a languages module for 10 students — all of whom are part of different programmes outside the School of Modern Languages — the School should amend the marks in SAP/NESS and should then notify, in writing, each of the Chairs of the 10 Board of Examiners and the relevant School Administrators. This is to ensure that any consequential changes to students’ progression/awards are considered, and so that any amended transcripts can be issued.

3. Return of Marks

Undergraduate Examination Convention F28
Integrated Masters Examination Conventions F28
Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions F28
Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) Regulation E16

Supplementary notes:

  a) Averages of stage and honours performance must be based on the whole number for each module overall. Marks returned for modules are to be calculated to the nearest whole number (following the usual procedure for rounding); the stage averages and the overall weighted average are to be returned to one decimal place (but rounded to a whole number at the point of determining the award/degree classification).

  b) As the regulations require only overall, aggregate results for modules, component marks are additional only. It is advisable for the component marks to be available at the meeting of the Board, but this is supplementary information.

  c) The methodology for calculating averages is described in Appendix 2, and this is followed by a number of examples (which are referenced later in these notes); Example 1 is sufficient to show the procedure.

  d) For Undergraduates, if any Stage 1 modules are taken at Stages 2, 3 (or 4), the marks must be returned on the Degree Classification scale i.e. the marks so returned must accord with the attainments that correspond to the appropriate descriptors. This might exclude some Stage 1 modules from ever being taken beyond Stage 1 because marks could never be returned on the Degree
Classification scale. It is the responsibility of DPDs to confirm that such a module selection is viable in this sense.

e) CATS Students

It is important that module marks are confirmed to CATS students within a reasonable period of time and therefore recommended that a Board of Examiners’ meeting normally be held within four weeks of the assessment taking place. However, it is acceptable to release provisional marks on the condition that the expectations of students and sponsors are managed, with schools providing clear guidance as to when marks will be provided and that provisional marks may change as a result of moderation. Irrespective of when the Board of Examiners may meet, the opinion of the External Examiner must be sought and have been received prior to the meeting.

Pass marks for undergraduates and postgraduates taking the same module

The pass mark for all students taking a level 7 (ie. Masters level) module is 50. This represents a higher standard of work than the undergraduate (levels 4-6) pass mark of 40. It may be reasonably common for a student to have a combination of level 7 and level 4-6 modules. This will have no bearing on the calculation of Stage or Degree average, but must be taken into account when considering the use of discretion or compensation. For Integrated Masters students, the internal Stage threshold must also be considered.

Absence

Undergraduate Examination Conventions C22
Integrated Masters Examination Conventions C22
Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions C22

Supplementary notes:

a) The mark of 0 relates only to the component missed. The mark of 0 is therefore relevant to either absence from examination or non-submission of assessed work.

b) Where there was an absence or special circumstance, it may be that a PEC application is to be put forward to request that the missed attempt is set aside. Assuming that the PEC application has not yet been considered, the marks presented to the Board should use the mark of 0 for the missed element.

c) It is recommended as good practice for the module leader to provide information to Boards of Examiners on absence from examinations - but this is supplementary information to the main mark grid.

d) As the mark of 0 relates only to the missed component of assessment, it is not possible to distinguish - on the basis of the mark alone - an absence from examination.

e) The final mark produced for a module is the one that must appear on the transcript, even if this is a low mark that is treated appropriately for the purposes of a degree-classification calculation (by decision of the Board on the basis of a recommendation from the PEC Committee). Any explanation can, of course, be given to the student by word of mouth, and incorporated in a reference.

f) In the case where a fairly small fraction of the assessment is missed for ill health, for example, the module leader may reasonably ignore* this absence for the purposes of computing the contribution of the in-course assessment to the final mark. Such a decision should be taken by the PEC Committee in consultation with the Module Leader and, preferably, in line with a general policy agreed by the Board of Studies (and consistently applied by the School). However, this approach is not to be advised if most of (or all) the elements of the assessment are missing. Nevertheless, this same principle might be applied if all the in-course assessment is missed (mitigating circumstances known), but it
contributes only a small fraction of the total mark – 10% say; the final mark is then based on the rest of
the assessment alone (following the pattern of the example below)

* For example, suppose that 6 pieces of work, each marked out of 10 (so the total available is 60),
are to be handed in, but two are missed (mitigating circumstances known), producing marks of, say: 8, 7,
il, ill, 6, 9. The total mark for the in-course assessment is therefore \((8 + 7 + 6 + 9) = 30\) out of 40 (the
total mark available to the student); thus a mark of \((30/40)*60 = 45\) out of 60 is returned. If the absences
were counted against the student, then the corresponding mark would be \((8 + 7 + 0 + 0 + 6 + 9) = 30\) out
of 60.

g) Exemptions of normally up to 20% of a module’s overall assessment may be granted by the PEC
Committee (UG Exam Conv.B15) but should not be applied to formal examinations. Consideration
should be given to the mode of assessment affected by any exemption. Generally, it is more reasonable
to allow an exemption if the student will still be completing a similar form of assessment in the module,
therefore meeting the module learning outcomes. PEC Committees should also be mindful of the credit
value of the module concerned when considering whether or not an exemption should be permitted.

Modules with Essential Components or Deferred Passes

_Undergraduate Progress Regulation H27_

_Postgraduate Taught Progress Regulation G20_

Guidance and Definitions:

a) Each module has one or more assessment ‘Components’ with titles drawn from a prescribed
list (e.g., Written Examination, Essay, Problem Solving Exercises). Component headings will be passed
from the MOF to NESS and component marks will be passed from NESS to the HEAR (Higher Education
Achievement Report). Each component may stand on its own, or may be broken down into ‘Elements’,
controlled by (or on behalf of) module leaders. Elements do not appear in the MOF or the HEAR (but will
often appear in NESS). For example, a Problem Solving Exercises component may be broken down into
several elements, one for each set of exercises.

b) One or more components may be labelled as ‘essential components’, essential for progress
on the degree, with failure to meet a prescribed threshold in such a component leading to failure of the
module and with a fail mark returned. A prescribed threshold cannot apply to an element or group of
elements within a component, it can only apply to one or more components. It can however apply to a
group of components, for example it could apply to ‘coursework’ where coursework is a combination of
several components. If a module has essential components, they should be clearly flagged in the MOF
(under the Assessment Rationale and Relationship) and the consequences for failing an essential
component should be spelled out. There are two ways of proceeding when an essential component is
failed:

(i). The module is failed and a fail mark must be returned for the module. It is recommended
that one of the following approaches is adopted:

- Return a mark of 35 (modules at Levels 4 – 6) or 40 (modules at Level 7) if it is
  regarded as acceptable, in principle, for the module to be passed by
  compensation.

- Return a mark of 34 (modules at Levels 4 – 6) or 39 (modules at Level 7) if it is
  NOT regarded as acceptable, in principle, for the module to be passed by
  compensation.

The normal consequences of module failure follow, including the pass mark being used
in calculating degree class in the event of passes by discretion, compensation or on
resit.

(ii). A deferred pass, in which a failure to meet a prescribed threshold in a component may
be redeemed as part of the same attempt, provided that the student would then pass the
module. It should only be used for relatively small assessment components (up to 10%
of a 20 credit module, or the equivalent). It is not intended for frequent use.

There should be a reasonable deadline for redeeming the failure. If a student does not
redeem the failure by the deadline, then they will be deemed to have failed the
module and must be awarded an appropriate fail mark (as in (i) above). The student should then
be given a new reasonable deadline (for example, the end of the August/September
assessment period) by which to redeem the failure. If a student does not redeem the
failure by the new deadline, then they should be classed as failing the module at the
second attempt, again with an appropriate mark. The third attempt should be set for the next normal occasion.

Providing the student redeems the first attempt failure, the first attempt mark is the original mark. In other words, the first attempt mark cannot be increased by redeeming the failed component. [The rationale is that students should not be able to target some components, knowing that they can improve other components later.]

Rules for compensation should be applied as if the module had been passed. In other words the board of examiners should act with the presumption that the failure will be redeemed and the original mark becomes the first attempt mark.

c) Zero Weighted Pass/Fail Assessments.

   (i). Such assessments only need to prescribe a threshold for passing the assessment.

In other respects, these assessments are treated as in (b) above.

Late Submission of Work

The University Submission of Work Policy is available at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/quilt/atoz/policies.htm

The University’s Submission Policy caps the mark of work submitted without an agreed extension, but within 7 days of the deadline, at the pass mark. Submission any later than this results in a mark of 0 being awarded for that work. It should be noted that this capping applies to the element of assessed work which is handed in late, and not necessarily to the mark for the module, as there may be more than one element of assessment.

Guidance:

   a) The module mark entered into SAP should be the mark calculated using the capped mark for the late work. As the capping only applies to the late work, there may well be other components or elements that are not capped, and therefore the module mark is not necessarily capped at the pass mark.

   b) The Policy states that the Board may have regard to the uncapped mark, in the same way as the Conventions allow raw resit marks to be taken into account. (UG Examination Convention 59).

   c) In the vast majority of cases it is unlikely that the BoE would want to take account of the uncapped mark, as the University clearly intends that late submissions should, in fairness to other students, be penalised in some way. It would be perverse if BoEs routinely undid the intended impact of University policy.

   d) However, where a candidate is borderline, the BoE may wish to take into account the evidence of ability shown by the uncapped mark to support the award of a higher classification. It is simply one of a number of factors that the Board may take into account.

   e) Where a candidate has submitted late because of medical or personal problems, this should have been dealt with through the granting of an extension or other PEC adjustment so the discretion to take account of the uncapped mark should not normally be used to take account of such circumstances.

   f) The BoE also has an unfettered right to exercise its discretion and none of the guidance above can limit that discretion.

4. Decisions available to Board of Examiners

Module Appraisal Decisions

   a) The range of decisions available to Board of Examiners by module is shown in Appendix 1A

   b) Decisions on passed modules are not required. However, an explicit decision is required for each failed module i.e. a mark less than 40 for modules level 4-6 or less than 50 for level 7 modules. This decision should be taken by the Board of Examiners that owns the student’s programme. In the final
stage of an Undergraduate or Integrated Masters degree, the Board should not consider passing modules by discretion (and there is no compensation available); rather they should return Fail for all modules with marks below the pass mark, and use discretion at the award level (if appropriate).

c) Currently support staff ‘interpret’ the decision of the Board of Examiners and allocate an appropriate progress code and module decision codes to each student. It is helpful if Boards of Examiners are aware of these codes and what they mean - ideally using them to frame their own decisions for students. This will minimise transcription / interpretation errors.

d) These codes are important as they will appear on the student’s transcript. Any inaccuracies will be referred back to the school and ultimately the Board of Examiners must justify the decisions made.

Stage Progress Codes / Decisions for Undergraduate Programmes

a) In addition, each Board of Examiners should make an explicit decision on the status of each student at the end of the Stage. The range of progress codes is given in Appendix 1B.

b) A decision is required on every student who registered (or was external) on the programme during the session. Some codes are essentially ‘temporary’ and would be over-written following the decision of September Boards.

c) These codes are important as they will be used to determine the section of the pass list on which the student’s name will appear, and to provide, where appropriate, information to LAs. In addition, some codes result in a ‘block’ on registration in the following September.

Progression Thresholds in Integrated Masters Degrees

Discretion may be used in consideration of internal progression thresholds (Conventions 32, 39 – 41). This includes consideration of actual marks on resit, but Boards must be mindful to avoid giving resit candidates an unfair advantage over candidates who have passed modules.

5. Compensation

Undergraduate Examination Conventions J34 and J35
Integrated Masters Examination Conventions J34 and J35
Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions K35 to K41

Supplementary notes:

a) Note that compensation is allowed in up to 40 credits of a stage of an Undergraduate, Integrated Masters or Taught Masters degree or a Postgraduate Diploma (J34(d) and K35, K36), except for the final stage of an Undergraduate or Integrated Masters degree. Up to 20 credits can be compensated for a PG Certificate and in cases where a student has registered for a small number of credits to top-up a lower award (K37, K38). Some programmes may have exemptions from these regulations included in their Programme Regulations.

b) Note that it is not necessarily the most recent mark for a module that will be used for the purposes of a compensation calculation: it is the best mark available. This implies that spreadsheets of marks must ensure that earlier marks are retained and not, for example, overwritten by more recent ones. Indeed, all marks must be available to the Board of Examiners (Undergraduate Examination Convention P59, Postgraduate Taught Examination Convention R56).

c) When a student carries a failed non-core module in the next Stage, the Board of Examiners will make a decision on that module in terms of the Stage it was originally taken in. In particular carried modules can be passed by compensation with the rules of compensation applied to the original Stage. See Example 7a.
6. Permission to proceed carrying failures

Undergraduate Examination Convention L43 & 44
Integrated Masters Examination Conventions L43 & 44
Undergraduate Progress Regulation B4(c)

Supplementary notes:

a) It should be noted that carrying of failed modules (20 credits maximum), at any stage before the final stage, applies only to non-core modules. In normal circumstances a students will have a third and final attempt at these modules at the next occasion of assessment (Convention M49).

b) If a student proceeds to Stage 2 carrying fails in one or more Stage 1 modules and does not pass one or more such modules after the final attempt (i.e. does not pass the modules outright and does not pass by compensation), the board of examiners has three options:

(i) The board decides that the student fails Stage 1 and therefore cannot proceed to Stage 3 under any circumstances. The student leaves the University (with a Higher Education Certificate if they are eligible). The decision is recorded as academic failure.

(ii) The board may decide to pass the individual modules by discretion if it feels this is merited. The reasons for using discretion must be recorded. From this point the student will be considered like any other Stage 2 student.

(iii) The board may decide to pass Stage 1 by discretion without passing every module. In this instance the decision recorded for failed modules is Fail and the progression decision in respect of Stage 1 is Stage passed by discretion, notwithstanding failures in specific modules. The reasons for using discretion must be recorded. From this point the student will be considered largely like any other Stage 2 student. Note however that they have not passed 120 credits at Stage 1 and this will need to be taken into account if the student is subsequently considered for the award of a Higher Education Certificate, a Higher Education Diploma or a Pass Degree (Conventions S62, 65 and 67).

c) In a three Stage programme, the discussion in (b) above will not normally apply beyond Stage 1. If a student on a three year degree proceeds to Stage 3 carrying fails in one or more Stage 2 modules, and does not pass one or more such modules after the final attempt (i.e. does not pass the modules outright and does not pass by compensation), then the board of examiners has the option to pass one or more modules by discretion, if it has grounds for so doing (the reason for using discretion must be recorded). Modules that remain fails should be recorded as Fail and the best mark for each should be used in calculating the Stage 2 average. It is not necessary to pass Stage 2 as such: the focus switches to determining the degree classification (Conventions Section N), where the number of credits failed beyond Stage 1 is the important factor.

d) In a four Stage Integrated Master’s programme, the discussion in (b) applies to some extent. If the board decides that the student does not pass Stage 2, then the student cannot proceed to Stage 4, but should be considered for a Bachelor’s award. If the board decides that the student should pass Stage 2 by discretion, notwithstanding failures in specific modules, then those failures would be carried to Stage 4 and would count towards the 20 credits of fail beyond Stage 1 referred to in Convention N51(b). Note however that the student can carry no more than 20 credits in total from Stages 2 and 3.

e) Note that Convention H33 has been clarified: if a student is deemed to have passed the Stage, notwithstanding failure in specific modules, then any subsequent calculation must use the best actual mark for each.
f) A student who cannot proceed to the next Stage at the normal occasion, either through failing a Core module and/or through failing more than 20 credits (usually this is after two attempts) may repeat failed modules out of residence or (with DPD's permission) repeat in residence. A student who is entitled to proceed carrying fails may (with DPD's permission) elect to take a year out, and attempt to redeem the fails before returning. It is possible that such a student may have exhausted all three attempts before proceeding to the next Stage.

g) In either case in (f) above, a student at Stage 2 who has passed all core modules but who has failed up to 20 credits of non-core modules after three attempts may only proceed to Stage 3 if the Board of Examiners exercises its discretion to pass the individual modules by discretion or to pass the stage by discretion as outlined in (b) above. If the students proceeds on the basis that the Stage has been passed by discretion notwithstanding failures in specific modules, the failed modules would count towards the 20 credits of fail beyond stage 1 referred to in Convention N51 (b). The normal expectation is that boards will use this discretion, particularly if a student would have been entitled to proceed carrying fails, but elected to take a year out; if the board chooses not to exercise discretion, then it should minute a specific reason for not doing so.

h) The same principles apply to a four Stage programme. In either case in (e) above, a student may only proceed to Stage 3 and Stage 4 of such a programme if the Board of Examiners has exercised its discretion to pass the module or the Stage as outlined in (f) above.

7. Determining Honours Degree classification

Examination Board decisions are recommendations only. Even if some are ‘as of right’, the University ultimately makes the award. In many cases (for example where students have a debt to the University, or an ongoing disciplinary case) the University can withhold the award – hence Board decisions can only be ‘recommended’.

a) Examples of calculations leading to an appropriate degree classification (as of right) are given in Appendix 2 (Example 5). Boards are reminded that any students who are placed not more than two percentage points below a classification borderline must be considered (with any special circumstances being noted). They, and any others with e.g. medical problems, may be raised to the higher degree classification by the use of discretion.

b) For Undergraduates, all modules taken beyond Stage 1 contribute to the final degree classification. For Postgraduates, all modules contribute to the final degree classification.

c) A candidate for an Undergraduate honours degree who is not awarded the degree may be eligible for either a Higher Education Diploma (Undergraduate Examination Convention S65) or a Higher Education Certificate (Undergraduate Examination Convention S67) or a Pass Degree (Undergraduate Examination. Convention S62).

d) A candidate for an Integrated Masters degree who is not awarded the degree may be eligible for the award of a Bachelors Degree and also a Postgraduate Certificate (Integrated Masters Examination Convention R60)

e) A candidate for a Masters’ degree who is not awarded the degree may be eligible for either a Postgraduate Diploma exit award (Postgraduate Taught Examination Convention T63) or a Postgraduate Certificate exit award (Taught Masters’ Examination Convention U66).

f) All Boards of Examiners should use, first, the most recent regulations, but should ensure that students receive any benefit that they would derive from the application of the regulations that were in place when they first registered. Thus it may be, for a few students, necessary to perform two calculations: one under current regulations and one under the previous (appropriate) set.

8. Failing Performance by Honours Degree Students

Undergraduate Examination Convention R60

Integrated Masters Examination Convention R60
Supplementary notes:

a) If a candidate for an honours degree is not awarded this degree, then one resit only of failed modules is permitted, normally in August of the same year and this will be for, at most, a third class Honours degree (see Convention 60 c (i)). The marks of the modules passed at the first attempt, and the marks at the second attempt, are the sole basis for the decision of the Board of Examiners; thus a candidate may produce a poorer performance than at the first sitting, but this stands.

b) All pass marks obtained at resit must be set to 40 before any calculations of degree class are performed (Examination Convention P59), however, the actual resit mark must be available to the Board of Examiners.

c) Do not forget that a failure of not more than 20 credits beyond Stage 1 does not affect the right to the award of an Honours degree (Examination Convention N51).

d) The Board should be reminded that discretion can be used to award an Honours degree even if more than 20 credits beyond Stage 1 are failed. However, the class of degree need not be that indicated by the final average mark (which includes the failed modules), but whatever is deemed appropriate, in the exercise of discretion by the Board. So, for example, a student with a final average mark on the programme of 52, but with 30 credits failed beyond Stage 1, might be awarded a Third Class Honours degree (rather than the 2:ii implied by the average mark). The reasons for using discretion, resulting in the recommendation of a particular award, must be recorded.

e) Template note from the Chair of the Board of Examiners to the candidate:

Preliminary Points:

1. It is recommended that in advance of the examinations, Chairs of Boards of Examiners circulate a note to all final year undergraduate students advising that they may be contacted shortly after the meeting of the Board about resits – that students should check their emails etc.

2. It is recommended that students be advised in writing of the matter - but a telephone conversation may be more expedient provided that the note/email has already been despatched

Dear XXX

On XXX, there was a meeting of the Board of Examiners at which your results were considered. The outcome of that meeting is that you have a choice as to how you wish to proceed.

The Board has determined that you currently have an entitlement to be awarded a Pass Degree. However, under University Examination Conventions you also have a right to resit some or all of the failed final stage modules on one more occasion (August). This may enable you to obtain an honours degree - but you should note that under University Regulations the maximum degree classification is a 3rd. In addition, you should note that your resit mark will be taken into account - i.e. if you perform less successfully in the resit you may no longer be eligible for a Pass degree. (Please see Undergraduate Examination Conventions at www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations for more information.)

It is important that you consider this matter carefully and advise whether you wish (a) to accept the Pass degree OR (b) to undertake resits.

If you elect to undertake resits then the Pass degree will not be awarded. If you elect to take the Pass degree then you will have no subsequent entitlement to take resits.

Please contact me as soon as possible if you wish to discuss this matter. Otherwise, you must advise me of your decision by XXX (14 days). If I do not hear from you in that time, the Pass Degree will be confirmed.

Note - an alternate version on this may be possible – where the candidate has met the thresholds for an HE Diploma and may be able to resit to obtain a pass degree.

Examples of calculations that do not involve a resit at Stage 3 are given in Appendix 2, Examples 6, 7, 8 and 10; two examples describing resits at Stage 3 (under new regulations) are 9 and 11.
9. Failing Performance by Taught Masters’ Degree Students

Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions M, N, T and U

Supplementary notes:

a) A candidate who has failed modules up to the value of 40 credits (Masters or PG Diploma) or 20 credits (PG Certificate) of the taught element of the programme is permitted, as of right, one reassessment per module. The marks of the modules passed at the first attempt, and the marks at the second attempt, are the sole basis for the decision of the Board of Examiners (subject to c) below); thus a candidate may produce a poorer performance than at the first sitting, but the Board of Examiners should use the second attempt marks.

b) A candidate who has failed their dissertation and has not failed more than 40 credits of the taught modules has the right to one reassessment of the dissertation.

c) All pass marks obtained at resit must be set to 50 before any calculations of degree classification are performed (Examination Convention R56), however, the actual resit mark must be available to the Board of Examiners.

d) The Board should be reminded that discretion can be used to pass a student in failed modules, however when discretion to pass modules is applied s/he shall be eligible as of right only for the award of a Pass. Discretion can alternatively be used to award a candidate a higher award than the class of award to which the student is entitled to as of right. The reasons for using discretion, resulting in the recommendation of a particular award, must be recorded (see Examination Conventions P54, 55).

10. Oral / Viva Voce Examinations

The terms viva and oral are often used interchangeably. However, it is suggested that the following terms should be used more consistently throughout the University:

Oral — language competence test, generally an oral examination in a second language. A mark is usually awarded for the assessment, and requirements to retake failing assessments etc. apply as in any other University assessment.

Viva voce (viva) - an overall assessment of the candidate’s performance. Normally, no mark is awarded for the assessment.

Undergraduate Examination Convention D25 applies. It should be noted vivas are no longer to be used, for any purpose, in Undergraduate programmes in the University.

Postgraduate Taught Examination Convention S62 applies. Any postgraduate student may be required to take a viva, at the discretion of the board of examiners, as a means of monitoring standards or for determining whether a higher classification should be recommended.

11. Resits – options

Alternatives to formal written exams:

a) Normally, when a student fails a module, then a resit is required. This may involve all or only part of the assessment - the Board of Examiners must decide. In any event, if an examination has to be resat, then the format of the resit usually follows that of the original examination, but this is not mandatory. For example, it may be acceptable to replace an unseen examination by a suitable take-away essay, or vice-versa. Nevertheless, all candidates must be informed of the nature of the resit and,
wherever possible, this should be described in the Degree Programme Handbook. The requirement to resit is to be transmitted to the students by the DPD and/or Secretary to the Board with instructions for the student to ascertain the form of the resit. Changes to format of assessment must apply to the whole cohort.

b) In some cases, the resit necessarily must be in a different format e.g. practical examinations which cannot be organised in August; it is left to the Board of Studies to authorise the form that such resits should take. In the case where it is impossible to offer a resit in some element of the assessment, then this should be ignored for the purposes of reassessment, although a mark from the first attempt of this element, which is to the advantage of the student, may be used. Note that it is the overall module mark at resit that is capped for degree calculation purposes, and not the component marks.

c) When students repeat in residence, they should generally have the normal student experience in terms of assessment. It is however permissible for the board of examiners to decide on alternative arrangements in exceptional circumstances (for example, if there are restrictions on student numbers for some part of the assessment). It would be good practice for Schools to provide clear information about the requirements for reassessment to students repeating in residence, advising them in writing at the start of the academic year.

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12. Timing of reassessment

_Undergraduate Examination Convention M48_

_Integrated Masters Examination Convention M48_

_Postgraduate Taught Examination Convention M47 and M51._

Supplementary notes:

a) Undergraduate students are expected to attend the resit examinations at the August/September resit period following the first attempt, as required; any absence without permission counts as an attempt. Permission to sit for the second occasion not at the resit period of the same academic year can be granted only by the PEC Committee. It may be necessary for the Chair of the Board to remind students of these conditions, both early in the year (so that holidays are not booked, for example) and at the time when the results are published after Semester 2. (Note that, if the degree programme regulations specify a work placement during the resit period following the failure, then the DPD may permit (M48 (b)) the reassessment at August/September resit period in the following year.)

b) Resits for the third occasion (not applicable to final stage students) will normally occur at the ‘next normal occasion’ in the following academic year i.e. this may be January for Semester One modules and May/ June for Semester Two modules. Permission to sit for the third occasion at an alternative time can be granted only by the PEC Committee.

c) Postgraduate resit examinations will usually occur at the University’s normal assessment periods, either at the August/September resit period or at the ‘next normal occasion’ in the following academic year.

d) Taught Masters’ students have the right to one resubmission of their dissertation, but this does not apply to students who have failed more than 40 credits of the taught element of the programme. Resubmission should be within a defined period agreed by the board of examiners, normally within 3 months of a board of examiners decision.

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13. Treatment of reassessment

_Undergraduate Examination Convention P59_

_Integrated Masters Examination Convention P59_

_Postgraduate Taught Examination Convention R56 and R57_

Supplementary notes:

a) Convention P59 applies only in the context of degree classification. Where a student has passed following reassessment, or by compensation, or by discretion of the Board, at stages beyond
Stage 1, a mark of 40 (or 50 for level 7 modules) must be used in the calculation of the degree classification.

b) Convention P59 does not apply in the context of progression. Convention J35 is used in determining a student's right to progress by compensation: the student's best mark for each module must be used in calculating the stage average and a new average must be calculated after each resit attempt (not just after the first attempt). Note that, for the purposes of this calculation, if the best mark is greater than 40, then this shall be used. However, the mark used thereafter, for determining the degree classification, reverts to 40 (Convention P59); see Example 4 in Appendix 2.

c) Note that a student on an IM degree is not permitted to resit modules that have already been passed, and therefore they cannot by this means improve their stage average. Note also that when a module has been passed by compensation, by discretion or at resit, a mark of 40 (or 50 for level 7 modules) must be used in calculating the Stage average for the purposes of determining whether or not the relevant progression threshold has been reached.

d) At each stage, the actual marks obtained at each attempt must be available to the Board of Examiners (Examination Convention 59), and may be taken into consideration.

e) The formal University transcript (from SAP) contains all the relevant return marks, making clear where there are any passes on lower marks or at the second attempt.

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### 14. Discretion

**Undergraduate Examination Conventions** B19 and H33, J39, K40-42, N56 & N58

**Integrated Masters Examination Conventions** H33, J39, N56 & N58

**Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions** L43, L44, L45, P53-55, T64 and U67

**Reminder:** Boards of Examiners are asked to be aware of the need for, and importance of, recording accurately the reason for the exercise of discretion or, where appropriate, the reason for not exercising discretion.

**Supplementary notes:**

**Areas where the Board of Examiners may exercise discretion**

a) The two main areas where a Board of Examiners may exercise discretion are in passing modules, or stages ‘notwithstanding’, that would otherwise lead to failure, or the awarding of a better degree than would be obtained under the conventions (including recommending the award of a degree where none would otherwise have been awarded as of right). Discretion must not be used to deny an award that the student gains as of right.

b) Applying discretion to pass a stage ‘notwithstanding’ does not have any implications for individual modules, so the transcript records the actual (fail) marks, as it always must, but without any flag indicating that individual modules have been passed by discretion. Nevertheless, the transcript must record that the stage, as a whole, has been passed by discretion. Note that one objective of K42 is the consideration of students who have failures, after three attempts, in up to 20 credits of non-core Stage 1 modules.

c) A Board of Examiners may use discretion to allow a student to progress despite not having the academic right to do so. Examples would include progression notwithstanding failure in a core module, or progression carrying more than 20 credits non-core fails. As with any application of the use of discretion, the reasons for the Board’s decision should be minuted. It is particularly important to consider whether the decision to apply ‘progression discretion’ will have any impact on the student’s ability to progress normally on the degree programme in future stages. Discretion should only be used rarely in such circumstances and always for a very good reason. It is not intended that Boards routinely allow students to progress in such circumstances.

d) Note that discretion is **NOT** restricted to the consideration of candidates who are 2 percentage points below a boundary.

e) The main circumstances where the Board might award a better degree are:
(i) To award a higher class of Honours or Masters’ degree classification to a student who qualifies, as of right, for an Honours or Masters’ degree.

(ii) To award an Honours or Masters’ degree (of any class) to a student registered for an Honours or Masters’ degree who does not qualify, as of right, for an Honours or Masters’ degree.

(iii) To award a Higher Education Certificate, Higher Education Diploma or a Pass Degree to an Undergraduate student who does not qualify as of right for this award.

(iv) To award a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate to a Masters’ student who does not qualify as of right for this award.

General Principles

a) When exercising discretion, the Board of Examiners must accurately record the reason(s) for the decision taken in the minutes; this could include a cross reference to the recommendation of the PEC Committee in cases where there were medical or mitigating circumstances.

b) In certain circumstances, the reason for not applying discretion should also be noted.

c) Each case should be considered on an individual basis in order to avoid creating a precedent, and the Chair of the Board of Examiners should be prepared to have to defend its decision in the event of an appeal.

d) It must be emphasised that discretion can be applied on an individual basis only, without precedent for the outcomes of other students. Whilst the Board should not create de facto rules by use of discretion, it should nevertheless apply discretion in a consistent manner. For example:

(i) If a Board recommends the award of an Honours degree to a candidate failing 30 credits in the final Stage it needs to have some grounds, such as overall strength or the passing of important modules. It should not then fail another candidate who fails 30 credits and meets the same grounds (although it may point to significant reasons for failing the latter and it should minute these). Nor should it thereafter consider a precedent set whereby all candidates averaging 40+ overall and failing 30 credits are passed.

(ii) An Undergraduate candidate with an overall average of 58. If the grounds for recommending the award of a II.1 by discretion are that the final year average is well over 60, then the Board should ensure consistency in considering another student averaging 58 overall by considering whether the same grounds would apply to the same extent, but it should not thereafter consider a precedent set whereby all students averaging 58 overall are awarded a II.1. Word of warning: this argument is not strong where the final stage already carries more weight than the preceding stage.

e) When a module is passed by discretion, Convention P59 dictates that the mark used by the board of examiners shall be the pass mark; this includes the current board meeting, it is not referring solely to future calculations. In particular the mark should be regarded as 40/50 in considering whether other modules are passed by compensation (Conventions J34-39/ K35-42). The board of examiners should be aware that passing one or more modules by discretion might, in some cases, lead to any other failed modules being passed by compensation.

f) Where a candidate fails more than 20 credits the exercise of discretion is required to award any sort of honours degree. The Board does not have to award the classification which the weighted average implies, even though a listing of candidates in order of weighted average might give this impression. For example a candidate with a weighted average of 51 and 40 credits of fail is strictly only entitled to a pass degree. Therefore the award of a third class degree requires the exercise of discretion and is a legitimate outcome. The candidate is NOT entitled to the class of degree indicated by the weighted average, because the candidate has not met the requirements for the automatic award of an honours degree. It may help to consider the hierarchy of awards in rising order – HE Certificate; HE Diploma; Pass degree; Third Class Honours.
Grounds for discretion

a) The Chair of the Board of Examiners should seek the Board’s agreement to the grounds for discretion in each case.

b) Grounds for discretion might be (but are not limited to):

1. For degree class: medical/personal circumstances, exceptional final year performance (exit velocity), advice from externals, strength in most important modules.

2. For passing modules: medical/personal circumstances, overall strength with passes in most important modules in a subject area, marks returned on a given module are low, student would have passed by compensation had they not been absent from another exam with good cause.

c) Discretion on medical or personal grounds should be based on a view of attainment. There should be evidence that appropriate understanding had been attained and that this would have been demonstrated had the personal/medical circumstances not intervened. Typically the personal/medical circumstances will have affected performance in, and/or preparation immediately before, examinations in one or more modules with coursework performance and examination performance in other modules providing appropriate evidence. Longer-lasting circumstances affecting understanding of pre-final-stage modules may be grounds for discretion when considering awarding a higher degree class. However longer-lasting circumstances affecting understanding in the final stage should not normally be regarded as grounds for awarding a higher degree class. For example, a student who is unable to attend lectures for large parts of the final year and has not attained the required standard for any reason (e.g. medical problems, student undertaking paid work), should not receive discretion on these grounds alone, however sympathetic one might be to the plight of that student. In some cases, applying to PEC Committee to re-sit the year as a first attempt is a more appropriate course of action, but it is not always feasible for the student.

Grounds for not using discretion

a) When a student has been given additional time to complete an assessment (usually an unseen examination, and usually for a disability such as dyslexia), the PEC Committee should not normally recommend any further discretion unless, in its judgement, the additional time does not adequately compensate for the problems encountered by the student. To recommend some discretion routinely in these cases is to apply a measure of ‘double counting’ which is unacceptable in terms of natural justice, particularly when set against the relative disadvantage afforded to students who do not come before the PEC Committee.

b) Even when a student evidently possesses poor language skills, the assessments must be marked according to the same principles as for all other members of the cohort. The marking, and the construction of the final return mark, should not take any account of the language difficulties. However, a case could be presented to the PEC Committee, and the judgement of this body will be reported to the full Board; only then might some adjustment be invoked.

c) Boards of Examiners are reminded that discretion should not be applied to module decisions with the purpose of over-ruling or nullifying sanctions imposed under the University Student Disciplinary and Assessment Irregularity Procedures. Both procedures include clauses which allow personal and extenuating circumstances to be taken into account when considering the most appropriate sanction, as well as mechanisms for appealing against any sanction. However, unless a Student Disciplinary Committee has expressly stated otherwise, a Board of Examiners retains the right to apply discretion in order to award a student a higher classification or type of award than a student has as of right. For example, an Undergraduate student may have been given a ‘0’ mark in a 20 credit module due to an assessment irregularity, and may have marginally failed another 10 credit module. Whilst the BoE should not return anything but a ‘0’ for the module affected by assessment irregularity, it may consider the case for awarding an Hons degree despite the ‘0’ and the other marginal fail. Student Progress Service will endeavour to make case outcome letters as clear as possible to ensure that Chairs of BoEs understand SPS and/or Student Disciplinary Committee’s intentions when imposing any particular sanction. Further clarification, if required, can be sought from the SPS case team by emailing casework@ncl.ac.uk
School or Subject Rules about Discretion

It is sensible for boards of studies to consider how BoEs should exercise discretion and determine the answers to such questions as:

a) Which modules are covered by the exercise of discretion on the grounds of exceptional performance?
b) What in such circumstances would constitute exceptional performance?
c) What sort of profile is required to justify the award of a higher classification to a borderline candidate?

In developing School or Subject guidelines on the use of discretion, Boards of Studies need to remember that any internal guidance is additional to rather than in place of the examination conventions and must be compatible with them. Schools should also be mindful that information about local guidance may need to be made available to candidates who appeal or make an FOIA request.

Flagging the use of discretion on the mark sheet

a) Where there are failing marks which have been passed by discretion, this should be detailed on the mark sheets returned to the Examinations Office so that it is clear that the student is not required to be reassessed either in whole or in part. (see the module appraisal codes detailed in Appendix IA.) Explicitly, the decision to apply discretion should be made against each relevant module.

b) Code 3 — pass by discretion — should be used to indicate where discretion has been applied. This clearly distinguishes those students from others who have a right to progress ‘notwithstanding’ failed modules because of compensation rules (code 2).

15. Chair’s Action

Undergraduate Examination Convention B6

Postgraduate Taught Examination Convention B8

Supplementary notes:

a) Action taken by the Chair should be recorded by the Secretary and reported to the next full meeting of the Board - at which point a written note will be made of the actions. This may be a paragraph in the minutes or a written report appended to the minutes.

b) Chair’s action should clearly identify action/decisions in respect of individual students.

c) Where possible, when a summary of action is presented to the next meeting of the Board, members should be given the opportunity to comment. A point of best practice would be for the Secretary to record which members of the Board were consulted, and the comments which were obtained (including those of the External Examiner), before the Chair took action.

16. Releasing results

Undergraduate Examination Convention B21

Taught Masters’ Examination Convention B21

Supplementary note:

a) When notifying students of the decisions of the Board of Examiners, the Secretary to the Board should make clear that the decisions are recommendations only, and are not official until publication of the pass lists. The Secretary may inform students of the outcome in broad terms, for example, by giving the classification of the degree or the position regarding progression.
17. Assessment Irregularities

The University Assessment Irregularity Procedure is available at www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm

Undergraduate Examination Convention C24

Postgraduate Taught Examination Convention C24

Supplementary notes:

a) The Chair and the Board must follow the University's Assessment Irregularities procedure - the latest version of which is available at www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm

b) Where an assessment irregularity is under investigation at the time of the Board of Examiner’s meeting, all marks which would normally be made available to the Board should be presented and the Chair shall provide an oral report on the status of the case. In most cases, a deferred decision will be recorded pending the outcome of the investigation. Formally, the Board must not record a decision.

c) The student may not progress until the investigation is concluded so it will be rare for a decision other than a deferral to be possible.

d) The Board may nevertheless wish to provide provisional advice, for the Chair, as to the likely academic standing of the student on the basis of the marks currently available to the Board.

Disrupted Examinations

a) When an examination is disrupted, perhaps due to a fairly minor disturbance, but it is decided not to run the examination again, the question of what, if any, account should be taken of the effects of the disruption must be addressed. The simplest rule of thumb is to assume that there has been no effect, mark the scripts following the usual procedures and compute the final return marks for all the students on the module. Then, on the basis of how these final marks compare with the other evidence available (perhaps on other assessments in the module, and on the performance of this cohort of students on other modules), a case for a suitable scaling can be made. If an adjustment is deemed necessary, then it should be made across the whole cohort, ensuring that suitable marks are returned on the relevant University scale, consistent with the classification boundaries and the descriptors (as appropriate). If there is no clear evidence that the disruption affected the final return marks, then no adjustment is necessary (but what is done, including nothing, must be carefully recorded and reported to the Board of Examiners).

18. PEC Personal Extenuating Circumstance (PEC) Committee

PEC Guidance documents and Procedure are available at www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/PEC.htm

Undergraduate Examination Conventions B14, B15 and B16

Taught Masters’ Examination Conventions B14, B15 and B16

Supplementary notes:

How it should accept reports of personal/mitigating circumstances

a) PEC Committees have a year-long role. Students are encouraged to submit PEC applications as soon as they have any issues to report rather than wait until the next formal assessment
period. On review of PEC applications, committee members have the authority to offer practical adjustments as well the option to retain the application for consideration at the pre-Board of Examiners meeting, where the case for applying discretion will be considered and rated.

b) The PEC Committee may choose to delegate consideration of certain cases to other staff within the School or academic unit. For example, the PEC Committee may wish for routine extensions to be granted by a Programme Secretary if clear evidence is provided by the student. Delegated staff must feel able to seek advice from PEC Committee members, or to refer the case through to PEC Committee members if they feel unable to make a decision on the basis of the evidence available.

c) Decisions made by delegated staff or PEC Committee members are still, ultimately, decisions of the PEC Committee and should made with that in mind. Staff making decisions on behalf of the PEC Committee should not need to be identified by name in, for example, the outcome emails that are sent to students.

d) In addition to encouraging year-round applications, it is recommended that the Chair of the Board of Examiners ensures that a communication is sent to all students requiring notice, in writing, of any personal/mitigating circumstances (and any additional evidence), to be presented to the PEC Committee at least 24 hours in advance of the scheduled pre-Board of Examiners meeting. Oral reports from students should not be accepted.

e) Staff should be advised that consideration of personal circumstances of individual students will not be considered at the Board of Examiners and, in the interests of parity to all students, circumstances affecting performance must be made available to the PEC Committee.

How it should report to the Board of Examiners

a) The discussions of, and the decisions reached by, the PEC Committee, must be minuted. Normally the minute will be compiled by the Academic or Administrative Secretary to the Board of Examiners (who should normally be a member of the PEC Committee), but this is not prescriptive.

b) The minutes should be used by the Chair of the Board of Examiners to provide a brief report to the Board in each case in respect of (a) confirmation that there were medical or mitigating circumstances presented to the PEC Committee, and (b) any recommendations for discretion made by the PEC Committee. The Chair may also usefully have to hand a copy of the summary spreadsheet of all PEC decisions in order to clarify the adjustments that have already been given in individual student cases.

c) There should be no detailed discussion of any individual student's personal circumstances at a Board of Examiners.

Membership of the PEC Committee

a) ‘Senior’ in this context means a member of the Board of Examiners (other than the Chair and the Academic Secretary) who is either (a) a Senior Lecturer (or above) and / or (b) has significant experience as a Degree Programme Director, Senior Tutor and / or member of a Board of Examiners.

b) The Chair of the PEC Committee shall, in consultation with the Board of Studies (and the Head of School or Dean if necessary), ensure that the membership of the PEC Committee is appropriate.

c) Note the requirement for an additional member of the PEC Committee. This should be someone from outside of the academic unit but involvement of this additional member will be minimal and normally limited to attendance at full committee meetings.

d) If the secretary is not a member of academic staff then a fourth senior member of academic staff must be appointed to the committee PEC i.e. Chair, plus three senior colleagues, plus the Secretary.

Marks

a) Marks entry on SAP: Schools may use the ‘Concession’ module appraisal decision for PEC cases as a reminder that the next mark may need to be entered as a first attempt (or second, or third attempt).

b) PEC adjustments may not necessarily apply to the module as a whole. In the majority of cases, only part of the assessment of a module is affected, e.g. the examination only. Boards of Examiners need to be aware of elements of assessment and the exact details of the adjustment granted
as this will affect the calculation for the final module mark; this detail should be included in the PEC outcome email to the student.

- A student might need to sit one component of assessment in August as a 1st attempt and possibly another component as a 2nd attempt. The latter might or might not be necessary, depending on the performance in the former. A decision by a student to attend only the former should not be taken as grounds for a special exam for the latter at very short notice.

- An initial decision should be made as to whether the student passes the module based solely on the 1st attempt marks. If the decision is a pass, then the appropriate overall mark should be returned as a pass at 1st attempt. If the decision is a fail, then the marks for the new 1st attempt(s) should be combined with the 2nd attempt(s) and the mark returned as a 2nd attempt with the appropriate pass/fail decision. However this procedure should not prejudice the student’s right to a 2nd attempt on that element which has only been attempted once, in order to produce an overall pass mark.

A point of good practice is for the Secretary to have access to a record of all PEC adjustments that have a bearing on Board decisions (e.g. approved deferral of assessment/examination). Relevant PEC adjustments such as deferrals should be reported to the Board and referred to in the minutes.

**Data Protection**

- Boards of Examiners should be aware that the written proceedings of the Board and the PEC Committee are covered by the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Minutes should be written in a manner which assumes that any student may submit a subject access request, and should be in a format to ensure that information regarding other students is not disclosed.

- Specific statements or opinions should not be attributed to named individuals.

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**19. External Examiners**

*Undergraduate Examination Conventions B8 – B13*

*Postgraduate Taught Examination Conventions B10 – B13*

**Supplementary notes:**

- The University ‘Policy and Procedures for External Examiners of Taught Programmes’, refers to the need for External Examiners to be present (or at least to be consulted) **when a recommendation for award of a qualification is being made.** The majority of Undergraduate decisions in August / September are taken with regard to progression to the next stage of a degree programme, rather than the award of a qualification. However, where candidates are sitting failed modules, for an award (also see ‘Failure of Final Stage modules’ below) this will necessarily involve some input from the External Examiners.

- External Examiners should be given the opportunity to attend all meetings, including Resit Boards, additional or reconvened meetings. **Externals must attend main session meetings where the bulk of recommendations are made.** For other meetings where there are only a small proportion of awards being considered, they can be consulted, in writing, in lieu of attendance at the meeting.

- As a matter of routine, prior to the Board of Examiners’ meeting the Chair of the Board of Examiners and, if appropriate, the Degree Programme Director, should ensure that all external examiners (and particularly those with no previous experience of external examining) are briefed about the degree programme regulations and relevant Examination Conventions.

- As a matter of good practice, it is advisable for Chairs of Boards of Examiners to brief their External Examiners prior to the meeting of the Board with a summary of evidence on cases requiring consideration of the use of discretion.
External Assessors for joint/combined programmes

Undergraduate Examination Convention B13

Supplementary notes:

a) External Examiners in the relevant subject areas are required to consider the work of all students, including those on Combined and Joint Honours programmes. The External Assessor for the combined/joint programme is responsible for monitoring the process of deciding awards.

20. Transfers to or within the University (Accreditation of Prior Learning & Direct Entry)

General Regulations E19-22

Supplementary notes:

For a student transferring within Newcastle, marks from one programme should normally be used fully in calculating the degree class in another programme with the weighting as determined for the new programme.

21. Transfers between degree programmes

Undergraduate Progress Regulation F18 - 21
Postgraduate Taught Progress Regulation E9

Supplementary notes:

a) A student permitted to transfer under Regulation F20 should not normally be required to repeat a module they have already passed. Note that a student can be granted APL for modules already passed.

b) Undergraduate Progress Regulation F21 (b) allows a student to transfer to a largely similar degree without gaining an unfair advantage over other students by setting aside previous assessments. Any new modules will be taken as first attempts.

c) A student who transfers under F21 (b) having failed a module twice will only be allowed one further attempt.

d) Undergraduate DPDs may, with the agreement of the relevant Board of Examiners*, agree transfers between programmes under convention F18 if the programme into which the student transfers would have been passed, thereby allowing progression, even when fails exist from the original programme. This will arise, most often, when a core module in the first programme is failed, but this same module is not core in the second, and passing is possible – as of right – by compensation. (Passing might also be allowed, in the second programme, by the exercise of discretion – a discretion not exercised in the first programme.) The procedure is therefore to agree to the transfer and then to apply the rules/discretion in the second programme. Note: This should never be undertaken without prior agreement that progress will be permitted in the second programme i.e. transfer to a second programme with fails standing is not to be considered under this heading; this situation is covered by F20.

*These decisions are likely to arise outside the meetings of the Board of Examiners, so the Chair of that Board will be taking action on behalf of the Board. It would be wise, if they are any doubts, for the Chair to consult a few senior colleagues on the Board and, of course, any such decisions must be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

Decisions about student transfers should be recorded on the DPD request form; www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/DPDForm201213.docx
22. What if … module marks are missing for individuals or cohorts

a) Secretaries to Board of Examiners should endeavour to obtain all marks for all assessments in advance of the meeting.

b) Where one or more marks are unavailable for an individual student, the Board may be able to reach a provisional decision (and give permission for the Chair to take action once the marks(s) are available). It should be made clear on the mark sheet where an overall decision regarding performance is deferred in order that the student is not included on the pass list. As soon as the mark(s) are available, and Chairs’ action has been taken, the outstanding mark(s) and confirmation of the overall decision should be returned in writing to the Examinations Office. Failure to do so may result in the student having an academic hold which prevents registration for the next stage of the degree programme or, in the case of final-year students, may delay graduation.

c) Where marks for whole cohorts are outstanding, the above may be possible but may be more difficult if the module is one taken by a significant number of students on the programme (and if it is core).

d) Marks entry on SAP: The module appraisal status should be entered as ‘Not Known’ but be overwritten as soon as the mark(s) become available. The module appraisal status must be amended in addition to the mark being entered.

23. What if… the student does not have the right credit load

a) Board of Examiners may find, when collating the marks for a student, or when calculating the student’s overall performance, that the correct credit load does not appear in the student’s module registration.

b) The Board should record and ratify all the existing module information (passes, etc.), but it has no power to set aside (or ignore) missing modules. The Chair is advised to contact the Student Progress Service as soon as the problem had been identified.

24. Systems for the recording and presentation of marks

NESS has the functionality to hold component marks and final module marks and module marks will be fed into SLM and the HEAR. Schools are encouraged to use NESS for producing reports for the Board of Examiners, or at least to work towards this end. However Schools are free to use their own mark grids or reports from SLM until NESS is fully implemented.

25. Retention of assessed work

Undergraduate Examination Convention W73
Postgraduate Taught Examination Convention X72

Supplementary notes:

a) It is suggested that any individual assessment (e.g. an essay, a set of exercises) which contributes 30% or more of the assessment for the module should be retained.

b) In practice, in order to satisfy the requirements of the External Examiners and QAA, it is likely that all assessments that meet item a) above and that contribute to the final degree classification will be retained in Schools for a period of one year after the award of the degree. In most cases, this will mean that Schools will retain some material for three years - because of the Stage 2 assessments, and the need to be ready for an appeal during the year after graduation. In many cases of small individual
pieces of set work e.g. 5 or 6 (or more), which in total contribute less than 30%, it is sufficient to keep a sample only of the work.

26. Academic Appeals

The University Academic Appeals Procedure is available at www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm

a) A point of good practice would be for the Board of Examiners to report the latest version of the appeals procedure for students at each meeting of the Board to create awareness of the process and to ensure that the minutes record any discussions and decisions which may be challenged by students.

b) Where the Board of Examiners is asked (by the Appeals Officer) to reconsider a decision following the submission and investigation of an appeal, the Chair should reconvene the Board as soon as possible to consider the evidence upon which the Appeal Panel has based their decision. If the appeal is related to a University award, the Chair should write to the External Examiner to invite him / her to the reconvened Board or, if attendance is not possible, obtain comments in writing.

27. Congregations

a) Advice with regard to the timing of meetings of Board of Examiners should be provided to ensure that pass lists are produced in time for confirmation of attendance at graduation ceremonies. The timing for undergraduate programmes is not such a serious issue (because Boards have usually met well before the closing date for confirming attendance at the July graduation ceremonies). However, postgraduate Boards are urged to have met no later than early November, so that all the relevant information is available for the graduation ceremony that is held early in December.
Regulations Guidance for Chairs of Boards of Examiners 2012-13

Appendix 1A – Module Appraisal Decision

1 Pass
The final module mark is an ‘outright pass’ i.e. over 40 for UG or 50 for PG level modules.

2 Pass by compensation
The Board of Examiners concludes that the final module mark can be compensated in accordance with Undergraduate Examination Convention J34 and Taught Masters’ Examination Convention K34.

3 Pass at Board of Examiners Discretion
The Board of Examiners exercises their discretion to pass what would otherwise be a fail mark in accordance with Undergraduate Examination Convention K40 and Taught Masters’ Examination Convention P53.

4 Fail and right to be re-assessed (Referred)
The Board of Examiners concludes that the final module mark is a failing mark, the student has the right to enter for a further attempt and therefore the module has to be re-assessed (in whole or in part).

5 Fail
The Board of Examiners concludes that the final module mark is a failing mark, the student does not have the right to enter for a further attempt (i.e. this was their final attempt, or, for Postgraduates, the student has failed in excess of 40 credits).

6 Not tested
There is no final module mark available, as the student has not completed the assessment for the module.

7 Not Known
There is no final module mark available as the result is awaited (should be updated as soon as the mark / decision is available).

8 Studied but not for credit
This related, e.g. to occasional students, or research students attending a module without undertaking the assessment. This indicator is used to help ‘close’ these module records.

C Concession
The student has a concession or PEC adjustment– e.g. to defer the examination, retake the module as if it were a first attempt, or to set aside a 2nd/3rd attempt. NB a Concession appraisal status must be temporary – it effectively means that the mark can be overwritten when an attempt is ‘set aside’.

D Decision Delayed
A final decision cannot be made as, for example, a mark for a component assessment is missing (should be updated as soon as the mark / decision is available).

P Deemed to have passed
Not commonly used. Consider appraisal decisions 2 or 3.

X Entered for Resit as External Candidate
This code can be used in place of appraisal decision 4 to indicate that the student is going to be reassessed in the module, but will not be repeating tuition (this is of particular relevance for boards considering Undergraduate August resits).

Z See Previous Year
This code can be used for students who are repeating failed modules in residence. A mark of zero and ‘Z-see previous year’ should be recorded against the first attempt and second attempts. The mark achieved at third attempt can then be added to the current module booking.
### Regulations Guidance for Chairs of Boards of Examiners 2012-13

**Appendix 1B – Stage Progress Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Decision Awaited/Unknown</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. deferred decision; holding code and must be updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>Academic Failure</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. failed (usually at third attempt) and has no further attempt at resit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>PG Due to Complete/Not Registered</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DD</td>
<td>UG Diploma Distinction</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DM</td>
<td>UG Diploma Merit</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>UG Diploma Pass</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>1st Class Hons</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>2:1 Hons</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L3</td>
<td>2:2 Hons</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L4</td>
<td>3rd Class Hons</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L5</td>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td>i.e. for use on MBBS/BDS programmes where a classification is not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L7</td>
<td>Pass Degree</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Aegrotat Degree</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>NB: Refer to advice in Appendix4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LQ</td>
<td>No Qualification Obtained</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. Erasmus, or Exchange students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td>PG Out of Time</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>PG Award Distinction</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>PG Award Merit</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PG</td>
<td>PG award No Division</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Pass Stage/Program Change</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. student has completed the stage but is transferring to another degree programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TI</td>
<td>MBBS to Intercalating</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td>NB: For Student Progress Service Use Only (in consultation with Faculty of Medical Sciences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>Proceeding Normally</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. student has successfully completed the stage and can proceed to the next stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XB</td>
<td>Bypassing Intercalating Year</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td>NB: For Student Progress Service Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XF</td>
<td>External Resit</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. student enters for resit at the next normal occasion of examination (is out of residence for the year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XH</td>
<td>Voluntary Time Out/Delaying Return</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. suspending studies for personal reason etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XK</td>
<td>Let Intercalate with exam failure</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td>NB: For Student Progress Service Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XR</td>
<td>Repeating Year</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. as second attempt, full or part time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XS</td>
<td>August Resit</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. student enters for resit at the August resit period following the first attempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XW</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. student has notified the School of their intention to withdraw (last date of attendance required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>UG Cert Distinction</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>UG Cert Pass</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PX</td>
<td>PG Diploma on Masters Programme</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Pass Proceed MBBS Stage 3</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td>NB: For Student Progress Service Use Only (in consultation with Faculty of Medical Sciences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>PG Award Pass</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>Intercalator Return MBBS</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td>NB: For Student Progress Service Use Only (in consultation with Faculty of Medical Sciences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>MBBS Stage Not Complete</td>
<td>UG</td>
<td>NB: For Student Progress Service Use Only (in consultation with Faculty of Medical Sciences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XC</td>
<td>Fail Stage/Changing Prog</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. student has failed to complete the stage and is transferring to another degree programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Proceed Writing Up Year - Registered</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Proceed Writing Up Year - LOA</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>Proceed Extension Year - Registered</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PW</td>
<td>Proceed Extension Year - LOA</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PX</td>
<td>PG Repeating Extension Year</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>PG Year/Stage Not Complete</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>Return from Leave of Absence</td>
<td>UG/PG</td>
<td>i.e. student returning from leave of absence (to generate registration for next year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Pre 1996/97 PG Award Obtain</td>
<td>PG</td>
<td>NB: For Graduate School Use Only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rounding Issues (updated October 2012)

When calculating mark averages, we usually divide one whole number by another. This could be something like 649/12 for a Stage average or 118.9/2 for a Final average. We are required to calculate Stage averages to one decimal place and Final averages to the nearest whole number.

Example: If the Stage 2 average is 56.7 and the Stage 3 average is 62.2, and if the specified weighting is 1:1, then the Final average is calculated as

\[(56.7 + 62.2)/2 = 59.45\]  
This is then rounded to 60. This candidate is entitled to an Upper Second as of right (assuming no more than 20 credits failed over Stages 2 and 3).

There are often several ways of arriving at the average. For Stage averages, the safest practice is always to perform the calculation as one whole number divided by another, as in Example 1 below.

Consider first Stage averages - these should be calculated to one decimal place. With the specific numbers that we deal with in calculating these averages we are usually dividing by 12, 24 or possibly 120 and there are unlikely to be any ‘double rounding’ problems if we take the number displayed on the calculator, round first to 2 decimal places and then to one decimal place. For example 1211/24=50.4583333 (to 8 decimal places) which rounds to 50.5; if we first rounded to 2 decimal places we would get 50.46 which still rounds to 50.5. In the unlikely event that we round to two decimal places and a 5 appears in the second decimal place, we should check a more accurate display.

The numbers appearing most commonly are in one of the following forms (the numbers after the decimal point being the important ones, the number displayed is already rounded to eight decimal places but it doesn’t matter here):

\[
\begin{align*}
684/12 &= 57.00000000 \text{ (often displayed as 57) rounds to 57.0.} \\
685/12 &= 57.08333333 \text{ rounds to 57.1.}
\end{align*}
\]

---

1 This does not prevent us from displaying averages to greater accuracy, but we must be sure to use the Stage averages to one decimal place in calculating the Final average to one decimal place and then to round the Final average to the nearest whole number.
686/12=57.16666667 rounds to 57.2.
687/12=57.25000000 (often displayed as 57.25) rounds to 57.3.
688/12=57.33333333 rounds to 57.3.
689/12=57.41666667 rounds to 57.4.
690/12=57.50000000 (often displayed as 57.5) rounds to 57.5.
691/12=57.58333333 rounds to 57.6.
692/12=57.66666667 rounds to 57.7.
693/12=57.75000000 (often displayed as 57.75) rounds to 57.8.
694/12=57.83333333 rounds to 57.8.
695/12=57.91666667 rounds to 57.9.

When Final averages are calculated, the weighting from Stage 2 to Stage 3 (and possibly Stage 4) comes into play.

If equal weighting is used, then because Stage averages are calculated to one decimal place, an initial calculation of the Final overall average is to two decimal places with either 0 or 5 as the second decimal place. For example, 57.3 in Stage 2 followed by 65.7 in Stage 3 gives \((57.3 + 65.7)/2 = 123/2 = 61.5\) exactly, which rounds up to 62. It would also be legitimate to calculate \((0.5 \times 57.3) + (0.5 \times 65.7) = 61.5\). Another example might be 54.7 followed by 54.2, giving \((54.7 + 54.2)/2 = 108.9/2 = 54.45\) which is 54.5 to one decimal place which rounds up to 55.

If a weighting of 1:2 is used, then the best practice is to calculate the Stage 2 average + twice the Stage 3 average and then divide the result by 3. For example 70.8 in Stage 2 followed by 50.8 in Stage 3 gives \([70.8 + (2 \times 50.8)]/3 = 172.4/3 = 57.46666667\) which is 57.5 to one decimal place and then rounds to 58. Correct rounding is important here because the student must be considered for discretion. Alternatively we can calculate one third of the Stage 2 average added to two thirds of the Stage 3 average (one can usually safely round to 2 decimal places before the addition, but not to the nearest whole number): \(70.8/3 + (2 \times 50.8/3) = 23.60 + 33.87 = 57.47\) which first rounds to 57.5 and then to 58. However it is not safe to calculate \(0.33 \times 70.8 + 0.67 \times 50.8 = 57.40\) because this is 57.4 which rounds down to 57.

If a weighting of 1:3 is used, then the best practice is to calculate the Stage 2 average + three times the Stage 3 average and then divide the result by 4. For example 54.3 in Stage 2 followed by 61.2 in Stage 3 gives \([54.3 + (3 \times 61.2)]/4 = 237.9/4 = 59.475\) which rounds to 59.5 and then to 60. Alternatively we can calculate one quarter of the Stage 2 average added to three quarters of the Stage 3 average (in this case without any rounding before the addition): \(54.3/4 + (3 \times 61.2/4) = 13.575 + 45.900 = 59.475\) which again rounds to 60. As a third possibility here it would be legitimate to calculate \(0.25 \times 54.3 + 0.75 \times 61.2 = 13.575 + 45.900 = 59.475\).
A word of warning for Excel users: it is not uncommon to find that a cell in an Excel spreadsheet displays a rounded number. This could be either a format setting that instructs Excel to display a number to a fixed number of decimal places or it could be a consequence of the column width. In such cases, Excel will use the real value in computations. For example, suppose that numbers are displayed to one decimal place and that Excel has calculated averages for Stages 2 and 3 as 56.45 and 58.45 respectively. It will display these as 56.5 and 58.5, and these are indeed the numbers we need. Suppose that Stages 2 and 3 are equally weighted. The final average should be the average of 56.5 and 58.5, i.e., 57.5 which rounds to 58 (the final mark being rounded to a whole number). However, if we ask Excel to calculate the average of the numbers in the two cells, it will calculate the average of 56.45 and 58.45, i.e., 57.45, and this rounds to 57 as a whole number. One way round this is to use the ROUND function more than once. Assume that 56.45 is in cell A1 and 58.45 is in cell C1:

In B1 type =ROUND(A1,1), in D1 type =ROUND(C1,1). The correct stage averages are now in cells B1 and D1. In E1 type =(B1+D1)/2.

In F1 type =ROUND(E1,1). This gives the Final average to one decimal place.

In G1 type =ROUND(F1,0). This gives the Final average as a whole number.
In the examples that follow, we usually calculate averages rounded to 2 decimal places and then round further to one decimal place. However we take care when there is a 5 in the second decimal place.

**Example 1:** Stage 1 student (passing all modules)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>ABC1001</th>
<th>ABC1002</th>
<th>ABC1003</th>
<th>ABC1004</th>
<th>ABC1005</th>
<th>ABC1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To calculate the Stage average, either

1) Multiply each mark by its module credit value, add the resulting numbers and divide by 120 (the total number of credits):

\[
(10 \times 71) + (10 \times 42) + (10 \times 51) + (10 \times 60) + (20 \times 45) + (20 \times 47) + (40 \times 62) = 6560
\]

and \(6560/120 = 54.67\) (2 decimal places), or

2) Regard credit values as multiples of 10 and calculate:

\[
(1 \times 71) + (1 \times 42) + (1 \times 51) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 45) + (2 \times 47) + (4 \times 62) = 656
\]

followed by \(656/12 = 54.67\) (2 decimal places).

The **Stage average** is 54.7 (the value of 656/12 rounded one decimal place).
Example 2: Stage 1 student (passing by compensation at first attempt)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>ABC1001</th>
<th>ABC1002</th>
<th>ABC1003</th>
<th>ABC1004</th>
<th>ABC1005</th>
<th>XYZ1001</th>
<th>ABC1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To calculate the Stage average:

\[(1 \times 71) + (1 \times 42) + (1 \times 51) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 45) + (2 \times 37) + (4 \times 62) = 636\]

followed by \[636/12 = 53.00\] (2 decimal places).

The **Stage average** is 53.0 and the student passes Stage 1 by compensation, provided that module XYZ1001 is not deemed a Core module in the degree programme regulations. We could calculate a new Stage average using 40 for XYZ1001, but it serves no purpose.
Example 2a: Stage 1 student (passing by compensation at first attempt following the application of discretion)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>ABC1001</th>
<th>ABC1002</th>
<th>ABC1003</th>
<th>ABC1004</th>
<th>ABC1005</th>
<th>XYZ1001</th>
<th>ABC1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To calculate the Stage average:

\[
(1 \times 41) + (1 \times 43) + (1 \times 41) + (1 \times 45) + (2 \times 35) + (2 \times 30) + (4 \times 40) = 460
\]

followed by \( \frac{460}{12} = 38.33 \) (2 decimal places).

The **Stage average** is 38.3 and the student fails 40 credits. If the module XYZ1001 is passed by discretion, then the calculation becomes

\[
(1 \times 41) + (1 \times 43) + (1 \times 41) + (1 \times 45) + (2 \times 35) + (2 \times 40) + (4 \times 40) = 480
\]

followed by \( \frac{480}{12} = 40.00 \). At this point the student passes Stage 1 by compensation, provided that module ABC1005 is not deemed a Core module in the degree programme regulations. We could calculate a new Stage average using 40 for ABC1005, but it serves no purpose.
**Example 3**: Stage 1 student (failing a Core module and passing using a best attempt)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>ABC1001</th>
<th>ABC1002</th>
<th>ABC1003</th>
<th>ABC1004</th>
<th>ABC1005</th>
<th>XYZ1001</th>
<th>ABC1999</th>
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<tr>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>35</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2009</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is assumed here that ABC1005 is deemed Core but that ABC1001 and ABC1002 are not. To calculate the Stage average:

\[
(1 \times 21) + (1 \times 32) + (1 \times 40) + (1 \times 40) + (2 \times 38) + (2 \times 41) + (4 \times 40) = 451
\]

followed by \( \frac{451}{12} = 37.58 \) (2 decimal places). The **Stage average** is 37.6.

In August 2008, ABC1001 is passed but the Core module ABC1005 is not. The Stage average is now

\[
(1 \times 50) + (1 \times 35) + (1 \times 40) + (1 \times 40) + (2 \times 38) + (2 \times 41) + (4 \times 40) = 483
\]

followed by \( \frac{483}{12} = 40.25 \) (2 decimal places) – note the use of the better mark for ABC1005. The **Stage average** is now 40.3 but the student cannot pass by compensation because a Core module has been failed. The student will have a third attempt out of residence.

In June 2009, the Core module ABC1005 is passed. The Stage 1 average becomes

\[
(1 \times 50) + (1 \times 35) + (1 \times 40) + (1 \times 40) + (2 \times 40) + (2 \times 41) + (4 \times 40) = 487
\]

followed by \( \frac{487}{12} = 40.58 \) (2 decimal places) – note the use of the best mark for ABC1002. The **Stage average** is now 40.6 and the student passes by compensation. We could calculate a new Stage average using 40 for ABC1002, but it serves no purpose.
**Example 4:** Stage 2 student (passing by compensation at first attempt)

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<td>51</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>62</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In this example we assume that XYZ2001 is not deemed a Core module in the degree programme regulations. Two different averages need to be calculated.

1) The first is with the marks presented, calculating:
\[(1 \times 71) + (1 \times 42) + (1 \times 51) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 45) + (2 \times 37) + (4 \times 62) = 636\]
followed by \[636/12 = 53.00\] (2 decimal places).

The initial Stage average is 53.0 and the student passes Stage 2 by compensation.

2) The second is calculated ‘after the event’ and will be the Stage 2 average for the purposes of determining the degree classification. Given that the module XYZ2001 has been passed, a mark of 40 will be used in calculations, so that the Stage 2 average is calculated from:
\[(1 \times 71) + (1 \times 42) + (1 \times 51) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 45) + (2 \times 40) + (4 \times 62) = 642\]
followed by \[642/12 = 53.50\] (2 decimal places).

The **Stage average** is 53.5 for the purposes of determining the degree classification.
Example 5: Stage 2 student (passing by compensation at second attempt)

In this example we assume that module XYZ2001 is not deemed a Core module in the degree programme regulations. Three different averages need to be calculated.

1) The first is with the marks presented in June

\[(1 \times 31) + (1 \times 42) + (1 \times 51) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 45) + (2 \times 37) + (4 \times 62) = 596\]

followed by \(\frac{596}{12} = 49.67\) (2 decimal places), rounded to \textbf{49.7}.

The initial Stage average is 49.7, but the student does not pass either of ABC2001 or XYZ2001 by right (there is a mark below 35 so compensation does not apply at all). We now assume that no discretion is applied and that, in consequence, the student resits both modules.

2) The second is calculated in August using the better of the marks available on each of ABC2001 and XYZ2001:

\[(1 \times 45) + (1 \times 42) + (1 \times 51) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 45) + (2 \times 37) + (4 \times 62) = 610\]

followed by \(\frac{610}{12} = 50.83\) (2 decimal places), rounded to \textbf{50.8}.

Note that, by Convention J34 (Principles of Compensation), a calculation for the purpose of determining whether or not a student passes by compensation must use “the best module marks that relate to a given stage, regardless of whether the assessments are first or later attempts”, so here we use the mark of 45 for ABC2001 and the mark of 37 for XYZ2001.
The Stage average is now 50.8 and the student has passed ABC2001 at the second attempt, while the first attempt at XYZ2001 is now deemed a pass by compensation. Stage 2 is now passed.

3) The third is calculated ‘after the event’ and will be the Stage 2 average for the purposes of determining the degree classification. Given that the modules ABC2001 and XYZ2001 have been passed, a mark of 40 will be used in each case in calculations, so that the Stage 2 average is calculated by:

\[(1 \times 40) + (1 \times 42) + (1 \times 51) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 45) + (2 \times 40) + (4 \times 62) = 611\]

followed by \(611/12 = 50.92\) (2 decimal places), rounded to 50.9.

The **Stage average** is 50.9 for the purposes of determining the degree classification.
Example 6: Stage 3 student (passing Stage 2 at first attempt and awarded Honours).

We assume that Stage 3 is the final year. The **Stage 2 average** is calculated from 
\[(1 \times 71) + (1 \times 49) + (1 \times 51) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 55) + (2 \times 47) + (4 \times 42) = 603\] followed by 
\[603/12 = 50.25, \text{ rounded to } 50.3.\]

The **Stage 3 average** is calculated from 
\[(1 \times 29) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 55) + (2 \times 65) + (2 \times 75) + (4 \times 69) = 755\]
followed by 
\[755/12 = 62.92 \text{ (2 decimal places), rounded to } 62.9.\]

Whatever the Stage weighting, the student passes and receives at least a II.2. Note that the fail mark in Stage 3 is only in 10 credits. The mark of 29 is used as it stands (for a final Stage module there is no question of deeming the module passed by discretion or compensation and thereafter using a mark of 40). The final average depends on the weightings given to Stages 2 and 3.
Example 6a: (weighting 1:1)

The final average is \((50.3 + 62.9)/2\), i.e., 56.6 exactly, which rounds to 57. There is no obligation to even consider discretion. The student probably receives a II.2.

Example 6b: (weighting 1:2)

The final average is \((50.3 + 2 \times 62.9)/3\), i.e., 58.7 exactly which rounds to 59. The board must consider using discretion (but is not obliged to award a II.1).

Example 6c: (weighting 1:3)

The final average is \((50.3 + 3 \times 62.9)/4\), i.e., 59.75 which rounds to 59.8 and then to 60. The student receives a II.1 by right.
**Example 7:** Stage 3 student (carrying Stage 2 modules and awarded Honours).

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<tr>
<td>June 2009</td>
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<td>ABC3033</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We assume that Stage 3 is the final year. We assume that ABC2002 and ABC2003 are not deemed Core. The initial **Stage 2 average** is calculated from 
\[(1 \times 71) + (1 \times 25) + (1 \times 27) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 35) + (2 \times 47) + (4 \times 42) = 515\] followed by 
\[515/12 = 42.92, \text{ rounded to } 42.9.\]

The **Stage 2 average** calculated in August 2008 for degree classification purposes is 
\[(1 \times 30) + (1 \times 27) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 40) + (2 \times 47) + (4 \times 42) = 530\] followed by 
\[530/12 = 44.16 \text{ rounded to } 44.2.\] We use the better of the two marks for each of ABC2002, ABC2003. For ABC2005 we use 40 (but would use 45 if calculating for compensation purposes).

The **Stage 2 average** calculated in June 2009 for degree classification purposes is
(1 \times 71) + (1 \times 30) + (1 \times 40) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 40) + (2 \times 47) + (4 \times 42) = 543 \text{ followed by } 
 \frac{543}{12} = 45.25 \text{ rounded to } 45.3. \text{ The student cannot pass ABC2002 by compensation. We have now used the best of the three marks for ABC2002 and 40 for each of ABC2003 and ABC2005.}

The **Stage 3 average** is calculated from

\[(1 \times 29) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 68) + (2 \times 65) + (2 \times 75) + (4 \times 69) = 781\]

followed by \(781/12 = 65.08\) (2 decimal places), **rounded to 65.1**.

In each case the student passes and receives at least a II.2. Note that the student has only failed 20 credits over Stages 2 and 3 so receives an Honours degree by right. The mark of 29 is used as it stands (for a final Stage module there is no question of deeming the module passed by discretion or compensation and thereafter using a mark of 40). The final average depends on the weightings given to Stages 2 and 3.

**Example 7(i):** (weighting 1:1)

The **final average** is \((42.9 + 65.1)/2\), i.e., **54 exactly**. There is no obligation to even consider discretion. The student probably receives a II.2.

**Example 7(ii):** (weighting 1:2)

The **final average** is \((42.9 + 2 \times 65.1)/3\) = 57.7 exactly, which **rounds to 58**. The board must **consider** using discretion (but is not obliged to award a II.1).

**Example 7(iii):** (weighting 1:3)

The **final average** is \((42.9 + 3 \times 65.1)/4\) = 59.55, which rounds to 59.6 and then to **60**. The student receives a II.1 by right.
Example 7a: Stage 3 student (carrying Stage 2 modules and awarded Honours).

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<td>June 2009</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>June 2009</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We assume that Stage 3 is the final year. We assume that ABC2002 and ABC2003 are not deemed Core. The initial **Stage 2 average** is calculated from

\[(1 \times 71) + (1 \times 25) + (1 \times 27) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 35) + (2 \times 47) + (4 \times 42) = 515\] followed by \[515/12 = 42.92, \text{ rounded to } 42.9.\]

The **Stage 2 average** calculated in August 2008 for degree classification purposes is

\[(1 \times 71) + (1 \times 35) + (1 \times 27) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 40) + (2 \times 47) + (4 \times 42) = 535\] followed by \[535/12 = 44.58 \text{ rounded to } 44.6.\] We use the better of the two marks for each of ABC2002, ABC2003. For ABC2005 we use 40 (but would use 45 if calculating for compensation purposes).

The **Stage 2 average** calculated in June 2009 for compensation purposes is

\[(1 \times 71) + (1 \times 35) + (1 \times 36) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 45) + (2 \times 47) + (4 \times 42) = 554\] followed by \[554/12 = 46.17 \text{ rounded to } 46.2.\] The student passes ABC2002 and ABC2003 by
compensation. We have used the best of the three marks for ABC2002 and ABC2003 and the better of two marks for ABC2005.

The **Stage 2 average** calculated in June 2009 for degree classification purposes is

$$(1 \times 71) + (1 \times 40) + (1 \times 40) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 40) + (2 \times 47) + (4 \times 42) = 553$$ followed by $553/12 = 46.08$ rounded to 46.1.

The **Stage 3 average** is calculated from

$$(1 \times 29) + (1 \times 60) + (2 \times 68) + (2 \times 65) + (2 \times 75) + (4 \times 69) = 781$$ followed by $781/12 = 65.08$ (2 decimal places), **rounded to 65.1**.

The student has only failed 10 credits at Stages 2 and 3 so will be entitled to a degree determined by the final average. The final average depends on the weightings given to Stages 2 and 3. We don’t calculate it in this example.
Example 8: Stage 3 student (who does not attain Honours as of right)

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<td>13</td>
<td>70</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We assume that none of ABC2001, ABC2002, ABC2003 are deemed Core.

The initial Stage 2 average is calculated over all 120 credits:

\[
(1 \times 36) + (1 \times 37) + (1 \times 35) + (1 \times 47) + (2 \times 48) + (2 \times 42) + (4 \times 48) = 527
\]

and so the average is 527/12 = 43.92. Three modules (total 30 credits) have been failed, but no mark is below 35 and the average is a pass, rounded to 43.9. Thus the student passes by compensation. The Stage 2 average to be carried forward is therefore

\[
(1 \times 40) + (1 \times 40) + (1 \times 40) + (1 \times 47) + (2 \times 48) + (2 \times 42) + (4 \times 48) = 539
\]

which gives an average of 539/12 = 44.92, rounded to 44.9.

At Stage 3, there are fails in 60 credits, and so the student cannot be awarded an Honours degree as of right, no matter the overall average.

The Stage 3 average is

\[
(1 \times 40) + (1 \times 41) + (2 \times 43) + (2 \times 47) + (2 \times 30) + (4 \times 10) = 361
\]

which gives 361/12 = 30.08 and 30.1 when rounded.
Although the student does not receive an Honours degree as of right, the calculation should be completed; the overall average will depend on the weightings given to Stages 2 and 3.

**Example 8a: (weighting 1:1)**

The final average is \((44.9 + 30.1)/2 = 37.5\) exactly, which rounds to 38. The Board must consider using discretion to award a III (but is not obliged to award a III). On the other hand, the candidate has a right to a Pass degree under Convention 62, provided that they have passed 60 credits of Level 6 modules.

**Example 8b: (weighting 1:2)**

The final average is \((44.9 + 2 \times 30.1)/3 = 35.03\), which rounds to 35.0 and then to 35. The Board has no obligation to consider awarding a III. The candidate has a right to a Pass degree under Convention 62, provided that they have passed 60 credits of Level 6 modules.

**Example 8c: (weighting 1:3)**

The final average is \((44.9 + 3 \times 30.1)/4 = 33.8\) exactly, which rounds to 34. The student is not entitled to any degree. The Board may use discretion to award a Pass Degree if it has grounds for so doing. The Board may award a Higher Education Diploma (and would normally be expected to do so).

In each case, if the student is not awarded an Honours degree, they have a right to resit one or both of the failed modules in August.

Now assume that the student opted to resit both failed modules in August 2009 (and thereby waived his or her right to a Pass degree). The new Stage 3 average does not now use the better of the attempts at Stage 3, it replaces the first attempts by the new attempts to a maximum of 40.

The new **Stage 3 average** is calculated from:

\[(1 \times 40) + (1 \times 41) + (2 \times 43) + (2 \times 47) + (2 \times 13) + (4 \times 40) = 447\]

followed by \(447/12 = 37.25\), which rounds to 37.3.

The candidate has now failed only 20 credits at Stage 3, so might qualify for an Honours degree (at most Third Class).
Example 8d: (weighting 1:1)

The same final average is \((44.9 + 37.3)/2 = 41.1\) exactly, which rounds to 41. In this instance the student is awarded a Third Class Honours degree by right.

Example 8e: (weighting 1:2)

The final average is \((44.9 + 2 \times 37.3)/3 = 39.83\), which rounds to 39.8 and then to 40. The student is awarded a Third Class Honours degree by right.

Example 8f: (weighting 1:3)

The final average is \((44.9 + 3 \times 37.3)/3 = 39.2\) exactly, which rounds to 39. The student is not awarded an Honours degree by right. The Board might use discretion to award a III on the grounds of the actual mark of 70 in XYZ2001 and/or the first attempt mark at ABC3035.
Appendix 3 – Postgraduate Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>ABC8001</th>
<th>ABC8002</th>
<th>ABC8003</th>
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<td>46</td>
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</table>

**Example A: PGT student passing 1st attempts by compensation:**

At the end of the taught period, we calculate

\[(1 \times 59) + (1 \times 55) + (2 \times 45) + (2 \times 46) + (2 \times 58) + (2 \times 60) + (2 \times 50) = 632\]

followed by \(632/12 = 52.67\). At this stage the student may be advised that they will pass by compensation provided they pass the dissertation (assuming that ABC8003 and ABC8004 are non-core). It is assumed that no resits are taken.

For the main board of examiners a new average is calculated, now including the dissertation mark:

\[(1 \times 59) + (1 \times 55) + (2 \times 45) + (2 \times 46) + (2 \times 58) + (2 \times 60) + (2 \times 50) + (6 \times 72) = 1064\]

followed by \(1064/18 = 59.11\) (to 2dp) which rounds to 59. Assuming they are non-core, ABC8003 and ABC8004 are passed by compensation and a further calculation must be made using 50 for these modules:

\[(1 \times 59) + (1 \times 55) + (2 \times 50) + (2 \times 50) + (2 \times 58) + (2 \times 60) + (2 \times 50) + (6 \times 72) = 1082\]

followed by \(1082/18 = 60.11\) (to 2dp). This rounds to 60 and the student is entitled to a Pass with merit.
**Example B:** PGT student passing by compensation following 2\(^{nd}\) attempts:

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<th>Module</th>
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<th>ABC8003</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On this occasion we assume that ABC8002 is core but that the other modules are not. At the end of the taught period, we calculate an average of 63.42. As the student has failed a core module there is no possibility of passing by compensation. However ABC8001 is not core and will be passed by compensation provided that the student passes ABC8002 and the dissertation. It is assumed that the student resits ABC8002 but opts not to resit ABC8001.

For the main board of examiners a new average is calculated, using 50 for ABC8002 and now including the dissertation mark. The average is

\[
(1 \cdot 42) + (1 \cdot 50) + (2 \cdot 61) + (2 \cdot 65) + (2 \cdot 73) + (2 \cdot 70) + (2 \cdot 70) + (6 \cdot 45) = 1040
\]

followed by \(1040 / 18 = 57.77\) (2dp). Although this average is 58, the student has failed more than 40 credits and is not yet entitled to a degree. The student is entitled, however, to a 2\(^{nd}\) attempt at ABC8999 (the dissertation). Following the 2\(^{nd}\) attempt, a further calculation is made using the best marks available in order to decide whether or not ABC8001 is passed by compensation:

\[
(1 \cdot 42) + (1 \cdot 56) + (2 \cdot 61) + (2 \cdot 65) + (2 \cdot 73) + (2 \cdot 70) + (2 \cdot 70) + (6 \cdot 55) = 1106
\]

followed by \(1106 / 18 = 61.44\) (2dp). This determines that ABC8001 is passed by compensation. Finally an average must be calculated using 50 for modules passed at resit or by compensation:

\[
(1 \cdot 50) + (1 \cdot 50) + (2 \cdot 61) + (2 \cdot 65) + (2 \cdot 73) + (2 \cdot 70) + (2 \cdot 70) + (6 \cdot 50) = 1078
\]

followed by \(1078 / 18 = 59.89\) (2dp), which rounds to 60. The student is entitled to a Pass with merit.
Example C: PGT student failing 50 credits after resit:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>ABC8001</th>
<th>ABC8002</th>
<th>ABC8003</th>
<th>ABC8004</th>
<th>ABC8005</th>
<th>ABC8006</th>
<th>ABC8007</th>
<th>ABC8999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 1st attempts</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 2nd attempts</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the end of the taught period, we calculate

\[(1 \times 49) + (1 \times 55) + (2 \times 35) + (2 \times 46) + (2 \times 58) + (2 \times 60) + (2 \times 50) = 602\]

followed by \[602/12 = 50.17\]. At this stage the student may only continue if supported by the chair of the board of examiners. It is assumed that such support is given.

For the main board of examiners a new average is calculated, using to best mark for each failed module and now including the dissertation mark:

\[(1 \times 49) + (1 \times 55) + (2 \times 46) + (2 \times 46) + (2 \times 58) + (2 \times 60) + (2 \times 50) + (6 \times 52) = 936\]

followed by \[936/18 = 52\] (exactly).

Although the average is 52, the student has failed more than 40 credits and is not entitled to a degree. The student has 120 credits on which their performance would meet the requirements for the award of a postgraduate diploma, so the student is entitled to a diploma. The board of examiners may use its discretion to recommend the award of a degree in two ways:

- It may recommend the award of a Pass if it has grounds for so doing, notwithstanding the fails in 50 credits;
- It may pass one of the failed modules by discretion if it has grounds for so doing (a PEC submission for example). If ABC8003 is passed by discretion, then using 50 for this module a new average of 52.44 is calculated (which still rounds to 52) and ABC8001 and ABC8004 are now passed by compensation (assuming that they are non-core). Marks of 50 are now used for these modules and the average becomes 52.94 which rounds to 53. The student is now entitled to a Pass degree.