

CORE REGULATIONS FOR MODULAR TAUGHT MASTER'S DEGREES, POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMAS AND POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATES

DEFINITIONS:

1. In these Regulations, the following definitions apply:

A *Programme of Study* is an approved pathway of study leading to a particular named award of the University consisting of a defined combination of modules at an appropriate Level or Levels.

An *Integrated Programme of Study* is an approved pathway of study leading to a particular named award of the University consisting of a defined combination of modules at an appropriate Level or Levels, preceded by a period of intensive English Language instruction normally of 4, 8 or 12 weeks in duration.

A *Module* is a defined course of study which is self contained and which receives a specified number of credits. A single module at Level 4 is worth 10 or 15 credits; larger modules are worth multiples of 10 or 15 credits. A dissertation module at Level 4 is normally worth between 45 and 120 credits, as specified in the relevant programme regulations. Modules at levels 1 – 3 are worth 10 credits or multiples of 10 credits. Modules cannot be sub-divided and must be taken and assessed as a whole. Credits are gained when a student has satisfied the Board of Examiners in respect of the assessment requirements for the module concerned.

A student who takes a mixture of 10 and 15-credit modules in his/her programme must take at least the minimum number of credits required for the qualification for which he/she is registered. In some cases it may be necessary to take slightly more credits than the minimum number to accommodate a mixture of module valencies.

Each module is set at a given Level of study appropriate to its learning outcomes and is assessed against criteria appropriate to that Level. Certain modules may be defined in Programme Regulations as prerequisites for study of certain other modules at a higher Level. Not all the modules listed in the Programme Regulations for a given degree programme may be available in any one year.

Students are not permitted to register for the same module on more than one occasion.

Modules may be assessed using a variety of methods. The mode(s) of assessment for each module shall be as agreed by the Board of Studies and as approved by the appropriate Faculty Education Committee on behalf of the Education Committee.

A *Level* refers to the stage of study and indicates the intellectual challenge of a module or a year of study within a programme of study. The University's Level Descriptors provide a common framework for this. The following numbering is used in relation to Levels of study:

Level 3 = third year full-time undergraduate, typically equivalent to Honours degree level (*FHEQ Level 6*).

Level 4 = first year full-time postgraduate, typically equivalent to Master's degree level (*FHEQ Level 7*).

Level 5 = typically equivalent to Doctoral level (*FHEQ Level 8*).

PRE-CONDITIONS FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER'S DEGREE, POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA OR POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE

2. To qualify for the award of a Master's degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate, a student must:
 - (a) be approved by the department concerned as a candidate for the award;
 - (b) study and be assessed in accordance with these Core Regulations and the Programme Regulations of the award for which he/she is registered for the period of time required;
 - (c) satisfy the examiners in the assessment requirements as prescribed in the

Programme Regulations of the award for which he/she is registered.

ADMISSION

3. Applicants must be graduates of this or another approved University or possess some other qualification approved by the Education Committee. Normally an upper second class Honours degree or equivalent in a subject relevant to the proposed course of study is required, unless otherwise specified in the Programme Regulations.

4. Students admitted to a Master's, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate programme not already matriculated in the University must matriculate during the Michaelmas Term. As a matriculation requirement students whose first language is not English must have shown evidence of their proficiency in the English language.

INTEGRATED PRE-SESSIONAL PROGRAMME

5. Any programme of study may begin with a period of intensive English Language study, normally of 4, 8 or 12 weeks duration, as part of an integrated programme of study. Students undertaking this pre-sessional provision as part of an integrated programme of study will be required, at the end of the 4, 8 or 12 week period, to meet the agreed English Language progression requirements as defined for their main academic programme and approved by the Education Committee. Any student who does not meet this requirement will be required to withdraw. A student who meets the progression requirements at threshold level may be required to undertake a further period of English Language instruction as outlined in paragraph 12.

RESIDENCE

6. **Students are required to be members of a College/Society of the University.**

PROGRESS AND ATTENDANCE

7. Each programme shall last from the start date of the programme for the period of study required for the award. **All students are required to fulfil their academic commitments as provided in paragraph 1 of Section V of the University General Regulations. Failure to do so will render a student liable to be required to withdraw from the University under the provisions of that section.**

8. **The interruption of a student's programme of study will not be permitted for a period constituting more than 12 months or one academic year in any one instance, and extensions to a 12 month/academic year suspension of study will not normally be granted. A student will only be permitted to suspend for more than 24 months or two academic years consecutively in exceptional circumstances. Students who wish to suspend studies beyond this point will be required to withdraw, and advised to re-apply to the University (if they so wish) when they are in a position to do so.**

9. During any period of part-time study, students shall maintain such contact with the Programme Director or his/her nominee, and provide the Programme Director or his/her nominee with such evidence of progress, as he/she may require.

10. **Students undertaking full-time study may accept paid teaching, demonstrating and other research work in the University if the time given thereto during term, including time required for preparation, does not exceed six hours per week.**

11. Students wishing to spend a period away from Durham for the purposes of their programme of study or for other good reason must obtain permission from the Board of Studies responsible for the student's programme of study.

12. If it should appear during the first term of his/her programme that a student's attainment in the English language is not fully adequate for his/her study, the student may be required by the appropriate Faculty Education Committee to undertake, at his/her own expense, an approved course of instruction in the English language or to withdraw. At the end of such a course the Committee will then either satisfy itself that the student has become competent to proceed with

his/her study or require that his/her registration be terminated. If the student is deemed competent to proceed, the appropriate Faculty Education Committee shall determine in each individual case whether any of the period spent in receiving English language instruction may be counted towards the requirements for the programme for which he/she is registered.

PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS

13. Each programme shall be as specified in the Programme regulations. A student's choice of modules shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Studies responsible for the programme. In the case of a module chosen from another Board of Studies, the approval of that Board of Studies will also be required.

14. **A student must gain credits as follows subject to the requirements of the relevant programme regulations:**

- a) **for the award of a Master's degree: a total of 180 credits including at least 150 credits at Level 4.**
- b) **for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma: a total of 120 credits including at least 90 credits at Level 4.**
- c) **for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate: a total of 60 credits including at least 40 credits at Level 4.**

15. A student may be awarded a named award at a lower level than the award for which he/she is registered provided that the student has gained the necessary credits for the lower level of award as per regulation 14 above.

Unless otherwise stated in the programme regulations all named Master's degrees may be awarded at Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma level and all named Postgraduate Diploma awards may be awarded at Postgraduate Certificate level.

16. Students taking a taught Master's programme in part-time mode must normally take the dissertation in the final year, any research methods module before the final year, and as equal a division of credits between the years of study as possible.

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

17. Each component of assessment for a module shall be marked according to the table below.

Marking Levels for Each Unit of Assessment	
MASTER'S DEGREES, POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS	
% Mark	
70 - 100	Distinction
60 - 69	Merit
50 - 59	Pass
0 - 49	Fail

18. **The pass mark for Master's programmes, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates is 50% which must be achieved overall in each of the taught modules and in the dissertation.**

19. Notwithstanding the requirements in paragraph 14, above up to 45 credits for a Master's degree, up to 30 credits for a Postgraduate Diploma and up to 20 credits for a Postgraduate Certificate will be gained by compensation provided that:

- a) a mark of not less than 40% has been obtained in each of the modules to be compensated;
- b) the overall average for all modules taken including the module(s) to be compensated is at least 50%;

- c) the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme is not compromised by failure in the module(s) concerned. The regulations for each programme indicate which module(s) may not be passed by compensation because failure in that module(s) would compromise the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme.

The actual mark received for modules passed by compensation will be taken forward to the averaging process for the classification of the degree and will be entered on the student's transcript.

20. Candidates in the final year of their programme must submit their dissertation by no later than 5 September 2025. Any alternative deadline must be approved by the relevant Faculty Education Committee, and shall be as specified in the Programme Regulations of the programme.

21. All work submitted for assessment must be in a form suitable for assessment by external examiners and shall be available to the external examiners on request. The usual language of assessment is English.

22. A student who is unable due to illness or other good cause to submit course work, other than the dissertation, for assessment by the required date may apply to the Chair of the Board of Examiners or his/her nominee for an extension of that date. A student who is unable to present a dissertation may similarly apply for an extension of that date, if the extension is for no more than two weeks after the original submission deadline this request should be considered by the Chair of the Board of Examiners or his/her nominee acting on behalf of the appropriate Faculty Education Committee. If the request is for an extension beyond two weeks after the original submission deadline the student should apply to the appropriate Faculty Education Committee for the extension to be determined by the Committee in the light of the known circumstances.

23. Any module taken from Level 1 – 3 is marked according to the undergraduate mark scale but Master's students are required to obtain a mark of at least 50% to pass. The mark is included in the usual way within the run of marks contributing to the average for the Master's programme pro rata to the credit value of the module concerned. One resit is permitted in line with the usual provision for Master's programmes, normally at the next normal occasion of assessment. Because modules may have a valency of 10 or 15 credits, or multiples thereof, a student taking an undergraduate module may take more credits than those required for the Level 4 programme (e.g. 185 credits if a 20-credit undergraduate module has been taken in place of a 15-credit Level 4 module). A student may not, however, take fewer credits than those required for the Level 4 award.

24. A Board of Examiners has the power to exercise discretion to take account of particular circumstances if it considers it right to do so in the proper discharge of its duties. Such circumstances shall include, but not be restricted to, personal mitigating circumstances. Boards of Examiners may also take into account academic factors such as the overall pattern of marks gained by a student and the relative significance of various modules for the learning outcomes of the programme. The views of an External Examiner must be particularly influential in the case of disagreement within the Board of Examiners on the mark to be awarded for a particular unit of assessment, or on the final level of award to be derived from the array of marks of a particular student.

25. In order to be considered for the award of distinction by discretion a student must have obtained either a mark of 70% in their dissertation or an arithmetic mean of 70%, and a mark of at least 68% and less than 70% in relation to the other criteria for the award of a distinction. In order to be considered for the award of a merit by discretion, a student must have obtained either a mark of 60% in their dissertation or an arithmetic mean of 60%, and a mark of at least 58% and less than 60% in relation to the other criteria for the award of a merit. Boards of Examiners must consider exercising discretion for all students who fall within these ranges. Boards of Examiners may only consider exercising discretion to raise a classification for a student whose arithmetic mean falls outside this 2% range where there are personal mitigating circumstances, or a combination of personal mitigating circumstances and academic factors, that warrant such consideration.

Award of Distinction

26. The requirement for the award of the Master's degree with Distinction shall be as follows:
- (i) the achievement of an overall average mark of at least 70% across all the modules taken, to the value of 180 credits*, including:
 - (ii) the achievement of a mark of 70% or more in the dissertation.
27. The requirement for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction shall be as follows:
- (i) the achievement of an overall average mark of at least 70% across all the modules taken, to the value of 120 credits*.
28. The requirement for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction shall be as follows:
- (i) the achievement of an overall average mark of at least 70% across all the modules taken*.
29. Any supplementary requirements for achieving an award with Distinction shall be as defined in the Programme Regulations for the programme.

* Each module should be marked as a percentage and the total percentage mark for the programme obtained by adding the modules' percentages in proportion to their credit value; the overall average should be calculated by dividing the total percentage by the number of single module equivalents.

Award of Merit

30. The requirement for the award of the Master's degree with Merit shall be the achievement of an overall average mark of at least 60%* including the achievement of a mark of 60% or more in the dissertation, but where the candidate did not meet the criteria for the award of a distinction.
31. The requirement for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma with Merit shall be the achievement of an overall average mark of at least 60%*, but where the candidate did not meet the criteria for the award of a distinction.
32. The requirement for the award of the Postgraduate Certificate with Merit shall be the achievement of an overall average mark of at least 60%*, but where the candidate did not meet the criteria for the award of a distinction.
33. Any supplementary requirements for achieving an award with Merit shall be as defined in the Programme Regulations for the programme.

* Each module should be marked as a percentage and the total percentage mark for the programme obtained by adding the modules' percentages in proportion to their credit value; the overall average should be calculated by dividing the total percentage by the number of single module equivalents.

Re-examination

34. **Students who achieve an average mark of less than 50% in any taught module at the first attempt are allowed one further attempt to pass the module. The total number of taught modules which a student may resit must total no more than half the total credit value of their programme's taught modules, excluding the dissertation. The resit (without repeating the module itself) shall normally be at the time of the next normal assessment of the module component(s) concerned. Any alternative arrangements for re-examination shall be as specified in the Programme Regulations of the programme.**
35. **Students who achieve a mark of less than 50% in the dissertation at first attempt are allowed one further opportunity to resubmit the dissertation. The resubmission (without further supervision) shall normally be at the next dissertation submission time, unless**

otherwise specified in the Programme Regulations of the programme.

36. The mark for any module following a resit shall be capped at 50%.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

37. In accordance with the Academic Appeals Regulations contained in Section VII of the General Regulations in the University Calendar, a student registered for a Master's degree or Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate may appeal against academic decisions relating to his/her candidature.