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*This document is part of the Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures which govern the University's academic provision. Each document has a unique document number to indicate which section of the series it belongs to.*

## 6A - Standard Assessment Regulations: Postgraduate Taught Programmes

### 1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 Every Bournemouth University programme which leads to an award of the University, including the award of credit, is governed by a set of standard assessment regulations. The University has six sets of standard assessment regulations (Higher National, Foundation degree, Undergraduate, Graduate Certificate/Diploma, Integrated Masters and Postgraduate taught programmes) which form part of the University's [Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures](#).
- 1.2 The regulations in this document govern Postgraduate taught programmes and are intended for Bournemouth University staff and students. The regulations must be followed by the Assessment Board which is authorised to assess candidates in accordance with the relevant assessment regulations, and to recommend that awards of the University be conferred on those who achieve the standards required for an award.
- 1.3 The standard regulations are applicable, without modification, unless:
  - i) exceptions have been approved by the University for whole programmes, e.g. to accommodate the requirements of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). Where this is the case, the exceptions are recorded in the Programme Specification and the Level/Programme Handbook and must be clearly articulated to the Assessment Board at the beginning of the meeting.
  - ii) an individual student's entry profile and/or study choices necessitate changes, e.g. where units undertaken as part of a student exchange replace credit-bearing Bournemouth University units. As marks for units undertaken elsewhere will not be used to calculate classification of the University's own award, the final award is calculated solely on the basis of the units undertaken at Bournemouth. Similarly, where a student is granted credit exemptions towards a Bournemouth University programme<sup>1</sup>, award classification is calculated solely on the basis of the units undertaken at Bournemouth<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.4 All students sign up at enrolment to accept the assessment regulations prevailing at the time and any subsequent approved modifications during their registration period. The assessment regulations are made available to students on the Portal and are provided on enrolment in their Programme Handbooks. All students are notified of any changes made to the assessment regulations during their studies. The most recent changes to the regulations were introduced for all students from September 2017.

<sup>1</sup> Exemptions may be granted to students on the basis of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or UK Credit Transfer (UKCT). These terms were referred to as the 'Accreditation of Prior Learning' (APL) up until September 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the number of credits on which the profile regulation is based for classification purposes is fixed as outlined in the relevant Standard Assessment Regulations and cannot be adjusted for students who have undertaken credit-bearing units on a pass-fail basis as part of a student exchange or those who have exemptions on the basis of RPL/UKCT.

## 2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 **Senate:** to approve the standard assessment regulations and any amendments to these.
- 2.2 **Academic Standards and Education Committee (ASEC):** to review the assessment regulations periodically and recommend amendments to Senate.
- 2.3 **Assessment Boards:** to implement the assessment regulations. The Assessment Board derives its authority from the University Senate.

## 3. LINKS TO OTHER BU DOCUMENTS

- 3.1 These regulations should be read in conjunction with the [6L - Assessment Board Decision-Making, including the Implementation of Assessment Regulations: Procedure](#) which provides information on the application of the assessment regulations and outlines standard practice within the University in dealing with issues that commonly arise at Assessment Boards.
- 3.2 Functions and operation of Assessment Boards are as detailed in the [6K - Assessment Boards: Policy and Procedures](#).
- 3.3 [6H - Academic Offences: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards](#)
- 3.4 [6M - Research Misconduct: Policy and Procedure](#)
- 3.5 [11A - Academic Appeals: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards](#)

## Regulations

### 4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 These regulations conform to the principles set out in the current version of the University's *Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures*.

### 5. PERIOD OF REGISTRATION

- 5.1 The maximum periods which a student may take to complete the programme, from first registration, are normally as follows:

	Full-time maximum (years)	Part-time maximum (years)
PGCert	1	2
PGDip	2	3
MA/MSc/LLM	3	5
CPD	As above from first registration to a CPD framework	

- 5.2 Periods of registration may be formally adjusted by the Assessment Board on reasonable grounds. Maximum periods of registration may be set for students who enter with credit.

### 6. PASS MARK

- 6.1 The pass mark for each unit will be 50%. Where the unit is assessed by a combination of formally defined separate elements of assessment a pass will be awarded where the total unit mark is at least 50% and the mark in each separate element of the unit assessment is not less than 46.0%.
- 6.2 Where a formally defined separate element is assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, an overall unit pass will be awarded where the total unit mark is at least 50% and a pass is achieved in the Pass/Fail element(s). Where a unit is assessed entirely on a Pass/Fail basis, a pass must be achieved in all formally defined separate elements of assessment.

## **7. COMPENSATION**

- 7.1 When the total mark for a unit is less than 50%, but not normally less than 48.0%, and providing that no formally defined element contributing to the unit assessment has a mark of less than 46.0% (or a fail where assessed on a pass/fail basis), the Assessment Board will normally compensate for up to 40 credits at any one level. A pass will be awarded provided that the student to date has obtained a pass mark of 50% (or a pass where assessed on a Pass/Fail basis) in the remaining credits in the same level as the unit or units for which compensation is considered. Such compensation will only apply to the first attempt (including any subsequent attempt taken as a first attempt due to mitigation) and may not normally apply to a unit or units with a total value of more than 40 credits at any one level. Where compensation has taken place the pre-compensation unit mark will be recorded.
- 7.2 As compensation is based on the appraisal of the student's performance to date in the level for which compensation is considered, it cannot be applied before the student has attempted a minimum of 60 credits at that level.

## **8. PROGRESSION**

- 8.1 Progression requirements are defined in the Programme Specification for the programme concerned and include, where appropriate, successful completion of the specified work experience.

## **9. SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK AND ATTENDANCE AT EXAMINATIONS**

### ***Submission of coursework***

- 9.1 If a piece of coursework is not submitted by the required deadline, the following will apply:
- If coursework is submitted within 72 hours after the deadline, the maximum mark that can be awarded is 50%. If the assessment achieves a pass mark and subject to the overall performance of the unit and the student's profile for the level, it will be accepted by the Assessment Board as the reassessment piece. The unit will count towards the reassessment allowance for the level (see 12.2);  
This ruling will apply to written coursework and artefacts only;  
This ruling will apply to the first attempt only (including any subsequent attempt taken as a first attempt due to mitigation);
  - If coursework is submitted more than 72 hours after the deadline, a mark of zero (0%) will be awarded;
  - Failure to submit/complete any other types of coursework by the required deadline will result in a mark of zero (0%) being awarded.
- 9.2 Extensions, without penalty, may be allowed in cases of illness or genuine exceptional personal circumstances provided that an application is made before the submission deadline, normally before the submission date, and there is good supporting evidence. The application must be made in writing and the signed form submitted to the relevant administrator for authorisation before the deadline. Coursework submitted after the extended deadline will be dealt with as per 9.1 above.
- ### ***Attendance at examinations***
- 9.3 Failure to attend an examination will result in a mark of zero (0%) being recorded.
- 9.4 Examination postponement requests, without penalty, may be allowed in cases of illness or genuine exceptional personal circumstances provided that an application is made before the start time of the examination, normally before the examination date, and there is good supporting evidence. The application must be made in writing and the signed form submitted to the relevant administrator for authorisation before the deadline. Failure to attend an examination on a revised date will result in a mark of zero (0%) being recorded.

## **10. AWARDS**

- 10.1 All named awards are based on credit. The credits required for each named award are defined in the Programme Specification for the programme concerned.
- 10.2 A **Postgraduate Certificate** will normally be awarded to a student who has been credited with at least 60 credits at Level 7, and who does not wish to progress further on the programme or who fails a subsequent stage.
- 10.3 A **Postgraduate Diploma** will normally be awarded to a student who has been credited with at least 120 credits at Level 7, and who does not wish to progress further on the programme or who fails a subsequent stage.
- 10.4 A **Masters degree** will normally be awarded to a student who has been credited with at least 180 credits at Level 7.
- 10.5 An **Aegrotat award** may replace any of the above awards when the student has not achieved the required number of credits for the level they are considered (see section 13.3). An Aegrotat award is always unclassified.
- 10.6 Where defined as a requirement for the award, the student must have successfully completed the specified work experience.
- 10.7 In the absence of a named award, or eligibility for a named award, the award of credit is given for the successful completion of individual units.

## 11. CLASSIFICATION

- 11.1 All units will normally have a weighting towards final classification.
- 11.2 For a **Postgraduate Certificate** and **Postgraduate Diploma** classification will be based on the credit-weighted aggregate mark as follows:

Distinction	70% or more
Merit	60% to less than 70%
Pass	50% to less than 60%

- 11.3 For a **Masters degree** classification will be calculated in whichever of the following is more advantageous to the student:
- Credit weighted aggregate mark as calculated in 11.2.
  - Mark profile. Where a student achieves an aggregate mark which is not more than 3 marks below a classification boundary (60 or 70) and has at least 120 credits in a higher classification than the aggregate mark, the Assessment Board will recommend that the higher classification be awarded.
- 11.4 A *viva voce* examination may be required, at the discretion of the Assessment Board, at any stage of assessment at Level 7.

## 12. PROVISION FOR FAILED CANDIDATES

- 12.1 Normally students will be required to make good a failure in one of the following ways.

### ***Failure and reassessment***

- 12.2 The Assessment Board will permit a student who fails at the first attempt to be reassessed within the limit for reassessment for the level (up to 3 units with a total value of no more than 100 credits), on one occasion only, in one of the following ways:
- resit the examination;
  - resit the examination and resubmit the coursework;

- resubmit the coursework;
  - resubmit a piece of work of equal weight and comparable standard as directed by the Assessment Board.
- 12.3 Any late coursework submitted within 72 hours after the deadline will be included in the above level reassessment entitlement, subject to the student's profile (see 9.1 above).
- 12.4 Where a student exceeds the level entitlement for reassessment as detailed above, the Assessment Board may exceptionally determine a lower reassessment limit on academic grounds. The Board will act in accordance with 12.7 thereafter.
- 12.5 Where a student fails a 120-credit dissertation or project at the first attempt, the Assessment Board will permit the student to be reassessed in this unit only.
- 12.6 Where a reassessment has taken place, the formal element mark will not exceed 50%.
- 12.7 Any late resubmission(s) will be regarded as a fail. A mark of zero (0%) will be recorded for coursework resubmitted after the specified resubmission deadline.

### ***Repetition of units***

- 12.8 Once a student's reassessment allowance has been exhausted, i.e. the total amount of credits of failed units is beyond the credit limit for reassessment entitlement for the level, or the Board has determined a lower reassessment limit for the student (see 12.2-12.4 above), the Assessment Board will normally permit the student to repeat the remaining failed unit(s) for that amount of credit once only, or to withdraw from the programme. The Assessment Board should decide how reassessment and repetition should be applied to the student's profile.
- 12.9 Where a student fails in a reassessment for a unit as described in 12.2 above, the Assessment Board will normally permit them to repeat the failed unit(s) once only, or to withdraw from the programme.
- 12.10 In the case of unit(s) which are no longer current or available, an acceptable alternative will be identified.
- 12.11 Where a unit has been repeated, the unit mark will not exceed 50%. The Assessment Board will permit a student who fails at the first attempt in a repeated unit, to be reassessed, on one occasion only up to the reassessment limit for the level, in one of the ways identified in 12.2 and the unit mark will not exceed 50%.

## **13. PROVISION FOR FAILED CANDIDATES WITH VALID REASONS FOR POOR PERFORMANCE**

- 13.1 If it is established to the satisfaction of the Assessment Board that a student's absence, failure to submit work or poor performance in all or part of an assessment for an award was due to illness, or other cause found valid on production of acceptable evidence, the Assessment Board will act as follows.
- 13.2 Where exceptional circumstances are confirmed, a student may be reassessed as if for the first time in any or all of the elements of assessment, as specified by the Assessment Board. If an assessment affected by illness was itself, a second attempt the student will be permitted to be reassessed as if for the second time. Where a student has passed a unit at a first attempt but their performance has been affected by mitigation, the Assessment Board may allow the student an opportunity to be assessed as for the first time. In such cases the second mark will stand.
- 13.3 In exceptional cases, where the student's ability to complete their studies is affected by serious circumstances (such as terminal illness of the student), and it is established that the

student is likely to be unable to complete/return to complete their studies within a reasonable time period, the Assessment Board may act in one of the following ways:

- where the Assessment Board is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to determine the classification of an award, the student may be recommended on the basis of the available evidence for the award for which they are a candidate, or for an intermediate award specified in the Programme Specification. The decision of the Assessment Board must be ratified by the Chair of Senate.
- an Aegrotat award may be recommended when the Assessment Board does not have enough evidence of the student's performance to recommend the award for which the student is a candidate, or an intermediate award specified in the Programme Specification. Before such a recommendation is made the student must have demonstrated achievement at the level for which an Aegrotat award is considered. The Assessment Board must be satisfied that on the balance of probabilities but for illness or other valid cause the student would have reached the standard required. The decision of the Assessment Board must be ratified by the Chair of Senate. Where appropriate, the student must have signified that they are willing to accept the award.

- 13.4 The above awards in 13.3 may only be considered when the student has not achieved the required number of credits. Although the award title is conferred, the student will only be accredited with the credits achieved.

#### **14. ACADEMIC OFFENCES AND RESEARCH MISCONDUCT**

##### ***Academic Offences***

- 14.1 Where an academic offence has been committed, the Academic Offences Panel/Board will stipulate the mark to be awarded for the affected unit or element of assessment in line with 6H - Academic Offences: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards and the Assessment Board will consider whether the student is eligible for reassessment under Section 12 above.
- 14.2 Where the Academic Offences Panel/Board has stipulated that no opportunity of reassessment shall be permitted, the Assessment Board will withdraw the student from the programme. In such cases, the Academic Offences Panel/Board will stipulate whether the student may or may not be considered for an intermediate award in accordance with the assessment regulations.

##### ***Research Misconduct***

- 14.3 Where an allegation of research misconduct is confirmed in accordance with 6M - Research Misconduct: Policy and Procedure, a penalty will be stipulated in line with 6H - *Academic Offences: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards*. The Assessment Board will act in accordance with the principles outlined in 14.1-14.2 above to determine the student's results.

### **General**

#### **15. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

- 15.1 Details of the Academic Offences, Research Misconduct and Appeals Procedures are given in the current version of the University's Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures, including 6H - *Academic Offences: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards* and 11A - *Academic Appeals: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards*. These are also available via the Student Portal at [Important Information](#).
- 15.2 The QAA's [Advice and Guidance](#): (incorporating the Framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)) describes the level and achievement represented by all taught and postgraduate research awards (other than honorary degrees and higher doctorates) granted by the University.

- 15.3 The QAA [Higher education credit framework for England: guidance on academic credit arrangements in higher education in England](#) provides guidance and information on the use of credit in programmes leading to a higher education qualification in England.
- 15.4 This policy was reviewed according to the University's [Equality Analysis Procedure](#) in July 2019.