



# REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

Rules for Assessment, Progression and the Award of a Qualification

**2014-15**



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## REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES - Rules for Assessment, Progression and the Award of a Qualification

2014-15

### A. PREAMBLE

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. These Regulations and Code of Practice ('the Code') summarise the University's expectations for the conduct of assessment, progression and the award of a qualification in undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes.
- 1.2. The relevant sections of this Code may apply to the assessment, progression and completion of any taught components in research degree programmes. For further information please see the regulations for specific degrees in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*: [www.bris.ac.uk/esu/pg/cop-research-degrees.html](http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/pg/cop-research-degrees.html).
- 1.3. The Code applies to all taught students, including those who study on a part time basis. For this purpose, where reference is made to 'years of study' the policy must be applied on a pro rata basis and equivalent to the volume of credit that a full-time student would normally undertake in an academic year.
- 1.4. For the purpose of this Code a 'regulation' is defined as: 'a rule set by the University which must be followed'; and a 'policy' as a: 'statement established by common consensus that will be followed, unless there is good and validated reason otherwise.'
- 1.5. **Regulations within the Code may not be varied. They are indicated by boxed text.** The rest of the Code should also be followed. Any requests to depart from the Code must be approved by the relevant Faculty Education Director and must be in accordance with faculty policy. If deemed appropriate, the University Undergraduate or, Graduate, Studies Committee and/or the relevant faculty committees may be consulted by the Education Director. University and faculty committees will ensure consistency of practice university-wide, and will make decisions that take account of the spirit of the Code.
- 1.6. Following the introduction of major changes within the Code that apply to new registrations from the years 2010-11 and 2011-12, different arrangements apply to different cohorts within the university.

Students who registered before the implementation date for new regulations (or 'rules') for progression and calculating the final programme mark / degree classification are subject to the regulations in place in the academic year prior to the implementation date for the new regulation, for the duration of their programme of study.

Those students who initially registered for their programme before the implementation date but, through suspension or the requirement to repeat a year or undertake a supplementary year, on returning to study join a cohort of students that are governed by the new regulations, will also become subject to the new regulations.

Timelines for the implementation of these regulations are provided in annex 2.

## 2. Significant Changes to the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes* for 2014-15

Change	<p>Addition of a new section (in 4) and revisions to an existing section (30) with respect to <b>Integrated Master's programmes</b>, particularly to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify their purpose;</li> <li>• Differentiate between different programme structures (whether it is an 'advanced study' or 'professional development' type and/or whether it includes a formal period of study abroad or in industry);</li> <li>• Align progression requirements to the different programme types; whereas previously a common progression requirement was applied to all programmes;</li> <li>• Clarify exit awards from these programmes.</li> </ul> <p>The changes come into effect from the 2014/15 academic year; however where a higher progression requirement has been introduced, this requirement will only apply to students who are newly registered on the programme from 2014/15.</p>
Rationale	To develop an integrated approach to how these programmes are structured and run at the University of Bristol.

Change	<p>Policies on <b>student absence</b> (12) and <b>extenuating circumstances</b> (27) have been revised, specifically that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The definition of 'extenuating circumstances' has been refined to reflect that such circumstances can affect study or any assessment during the year, not just examinations, and are not just related to poor performance or absence.</li> <li>• Students are able to 'self-certificate' absence where they are not capable of taking the examination due to illness by notifying their school prior to the examination and completing / submitting an extenuating circumstances form. No medical evidence is <u>required</u> although may be submitted by the student.</li> <li>• The process whereby a student starts but is unable to complete an examination due to extenuating circumstances has been added.</li> <li>• The ECC can comment upon the degree of confidence it has on the impact of the reported circumstances, given the evidence available, if it feels it is necessary to do so.</li> <li>• An additional category has been established by which the ECC can classify those circumstances which may have had an impact but are deemed to be reasonably within the student's control, not sufficiently evidenced or not sufficiently serious to warrant an allowance.</li> <li>• Where extenuating circumstances have been accepted in the years of study that contribute to the classification of the degree, such circumstances should be kept on file for reference at the time when the Board of Examiners are considering the progression or degree classification of the same student.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new section for Boards of Examiners on how disability relates to extenuating circumstances has been added - given that, under the Equalities Act, the University has an obligation to make a reasonable adjustment to assessment where students has a disability or other protected characteristic, unless a competence standard is being tested.</li> </ul>
Rationale	Following a review of the University's extenuating circumstances policy and process, to adopt a number of clarifications and consolidate existing material that was previously provided in multiple sources.

Change	Update the section on <b>assessment and disability</b> (in section 18), particularly with regard to responsibilities and the nature of 'competence standards'.
Rationale	To ensure alignment with legislation and with new internal processes for the disclosure of a disability.

Change	<p>Revise the regulations for <b>student progression</b> in undergraduate modular, taught postgraduate modular and non-modular programmes (sections 30-32), which includes a number of clarifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students from another institution, who are studying at Bristol, are not permitted a second attempt given that this failure will be reconciled by their home institution.</li> <li>• A student should not normally be permitted a re-sit if he or she has achieved the criteria for the award of credit; if extenuating circumstances are present then these would normally be considered by the Board of Examiners when considering progression and classification, as appropriate.</li> <li>• Students may be permitted to begin an industrial placement or study abroad period, despite the Board of Examiners having yet to formally consider the student's progression.</li> </ul>
Rationale	To improve the operation of the regulations for student progression.

Change	<p>Extract and incorporate the key points from the previous guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning into the main body of the Taught Code as a new section (10), now known as the <b>recognition of prior learning</b>, which also includes some clarifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final 120 credit points of an undergraduate degree programme and the dissertation or research component of a taught postgraduate programme must be taken at Bristol (or a partner institution for a Joint Award).</li> <li>• The maximum amount of experiential prior learning that can be recognised is aligned with that for certified prior learning.</li> <li>• A School may invite an applicant to undertake an appropriate method of assessment where it is uncertain whether the experiential learning is equivalent to the standard of the unit.</li> </ul>
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Rationale	To ensure that University's policy for considering applications for recognising prior learning aligns with Chapter B6 of the QAA's Quality Code and that the policy and process is more visible in the Code.
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Change	Amalgamate and incorporate the key points from the guidance (previously presented within two annexes) on the <b>suspension of studies</b> for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students to become a policy within the main body of the Code. The section (13) also includes some minor revision, particularly with respect to the authorisation of a suspension and the process for requesting an extension to a period of suspension.
Rationale	To ensure the policy and process for the suspension of studies is common for all taught students and visible in the Code.

Change	Extract and incorporate the key points from the guidance (previously presented within an annex) on the <b>extension of studies</b> in taught postgraduate programmes into the main body of the Taught Code. The section (14) also includes some minor revision, particularly with respect to the maximum period for an extension and the authorisation of a request for an extension of studies.
Rationale	To ensure the policy and process for the extension of studies is clear and visible in the Code.

Change	Extract the key principles from the guidance on the process of the <b>supplementary year</b> (previously presented as an annex) to become a new section (15) in the Taught Code. The section also includes some minor revision, including the inclusion of a definition of the supplementary year.
Rationale	To provide a full account on the nature of the supplementary year.

Change	<p>Revise the University's policy on <b>sitting summative examinations outside of the UK</b> (section 17), principally to resolve the issue where some Study Abroad exchange students who study at Bristol are unable to undertake the requisite examinations in the January examination period due to having to re-engage with their studies at the their home institution at the same time.</p> <p>A number of clarifications and improvements to the wording of the rest of the existing policy as it applies to University of Bristol students have also been applied.</p>
Rationale	To resolve the conflict, which will encourage more students to attend Bristol for a period of study abroad and accordingly enable more Bristol students to take up the equivalent exchange.

Change	Add a new section (into 17) on the <b>electronic submission of coursework</b> .
Rationale	To provide a structure and guidance on the electronic submission of coursework, responding to a motion passed by the Student Union in

	February 2013 to support the implementation of electronic submission wherever possible.
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Change	Apply a number of minor revisions to the process for <b>student transfer</b> between undergraduate programmes and units (sections 7 and 30), including where the student has already been withdrawn from another programme and the attribution of responsibility for approving a request for transfer to the 'receiving' school/faculty.
Rationale	To clarify the process for student transfer between undergraduate programmes or units.

Change	Add a new section (9) on <b>intercalation</b> , which includes a definition and sets out the procedure by which a student may intercalate to another degree programme of the University.
Rationale	To ensure that the process of intercalation is explained and legislated in the Taught Code.

Change	Insertion of new regulations for the Degree of Master of Research ( <b>MRes</b> ) (in section 6).
Rationale	To formally outline the regulatory framework and structure for this type of programme.

Change	<b>Revise 33.13:</b> <i>"If the final summative programme mark falls within the range of one of the classification boundaries, as set out in 33.12, the higher degree classification will only be awarded if 50% or more of the recorded <u>rounded</u> individual unit marks, weighted by credit point value and year of study, which contribute to the degree classification are achieved at the higher class or classes, otherwise the lower class will be awarded."</i>
Rationale	To clarify the meaning of the existing clause in that the <b>rounded</b> unit mark (i.e. to the nearest integer) should be used when applying the secondary rule.

Change	<b>Revise 4.11:</b> <i>"Students do not have a right to take any particular unit as an open unit <u>and should not undertake an open unit in which they are already proficient</u>. The availability of any particular unit is subject to practical constraints such as space in teaching rooms or laboratories and timetabling. Subject to these constraints, students may also seek to take a unit (or units), which has not been flagged as being an 'open unit'."</i>
Rationale	Although already provided in online guidance for students, to explicitly state that a student should not take an open unit in which they are already proficient.

Change	<p><b>Revise 4.4.2 in the Examination Regulations (annex 5):</b></p> <p><i>“Recommendation to the School Board of Examiners</i></p> <p><i>The decision as to penalty will normally be recommended by the faculty interview panel, initially, to the <del>school</del> board of examiners <u>of the student’s home school.</u>”</i></p>
Rationale	To clarify that it is the student’s home school that should receive the recommendation from the interview panel.

Change	<p><b>Revise 8.5:</b> <i>“Graduates of the University in receipt of a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma award may be permitted by the faculty to re-register for the taught or research component (and to pay the relevant fee) for a Master’s degree, normally within the programme’s maximum study period or, where applicable, as part of Accredited <u>the University’s procedures for recognising</u> prior learning. In such cases, on successful completion of the Master’s award, the Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma will be subsumed into the higher award <del>and the original award certificate must be returned to the Faculty office by the student.</del>”</i></p>
Rationale	To remove the need for a student to physically return their original award certificate to a faculty office when the original award is being subsumed into a higher award.

## Annexes

- 3: The regulations for specific programmes (Graduate Diploma, BVSc, BDS, MBChB) have been revised to ensure the programme regulations are up-to-date in light of the introduction of common regulation.
- 7: New guidance on reasonable adjustment to the assessment of disabled students, as devised by Disability Services, has replaced the previous guidance.
- 8: The new University policy for external examining has been added.
- 16: The annex on dissertations in taught postgraduate programmes has been updated and become a 'policy' of the University rather than 'guidelines', as previously denoted.
- A number of annexes have been removed, as follows:
  - Guidelines for Programme Directors (being reviewed in 2014/15);
  - Credit requirements for students first registered on their programme of study before 2010/11 (no longer applicable);
  - Guidelines on the accreditation of prior learning for taught programmes (subsumed into the main body of the Code);
  - Guidance on establishing the grounds for granting a suspension of studies and subsequent return to study for undergraduate students (subsumed into the main body of the Code);
  - Guidance on suspension or extension of study for taught postgraduate programmes (subsumed into the main body of the Code) ;
  - Guidance on the options available for boards of examiners where extenuating circumstances are present (subsumed into the main body of the Code);
  - Regulations for progression, the award of credit and re-assessment for undergraduate programmes – for students initially registered prior to 2011-12 (no longer applicable).

## B. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND DESIGN

### 3. All Taught Programmes

The current programmes approved by Senate, governed by the regulations in this section, are provided at [www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/annex/annex-programmelist.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/annex/annex-programmelist.html).

The regulations for the specific programmes: MBChB, BDS, BVSc, Diploma in Dental Therapy, Postgraduate Certificate in Education, the Graduate Diploma and the MSc in Social Work are available at annex 3.

The Diploma in Dental Hygiene, which is governed by specific regulations, is subject to these Regulations except where the specific regulations in annex 3 indicate otherwise.

- 3.1 Each degree programme is the responsibility of the relevant faculty, subject to approval by Senate. Faculty Boards shall determine the programmes to be offered for each degree, diploma or certificate within the faculty and the units to be taken within each programme.
- 3.2 Every degree programme must be justified on academic grounds and the level of demand for them must be sufficient to merit the use of the resources required for delivery.
- 3.3 Faculties must adhere to the established procedures for the approval of named degree programmes.
- 3.4 Control over entry to any programme or unit rests with faculties (programmes) and schools (units). This includes the evaluation and acceptance of students transferring from other institutions or internally within the University.
- 3.5 All new and existing undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes must be fully modular in structure, with the exception of the MB,ChB, BDS and BVSc programmes.
- 3.6 Faculties and schools must specify the constituent units, as well as other pre- and co-requisites, for all existing and any new programmes in the programme specification.
- 3.7 Subject to the approval of Faculty Boards and Senate, schools shall determine: (i) the content and duration of each unit and the criteria for its satisfactory completion; (ii) the value in terms of credit points and level to be assigned to each unit; and (iii) the pre-requisites and co-requisites associated with each unit.
- 3.8 Faculties and schools whose programmes or units are either validated by professional bodies or which are required to adhere to curricular content specified by professional bodies will establish with those organisations what constitutes an acceptable curricular structure.
- 3.9 Where distance learning is required or offered for part of, or whole of, a programme, faculties and schools must consider and fulfil the principles for the design and delivery of programmes by distance learning set out in annex 4.

### ***Unit sizes and structure of the teaching year***

- 3.10 The University's standard unit sizes are 10, 20, 30, 40 and 60 credit points. A single 120 credit point undergraduate unit which encompasses a full academic year where the student is studying abroad or in industry is also permitted.
- 3.11 In postgraduate taught programmes, units of more than 60 credit points are permitted to accommodate projects or dissertations.
- 3.12 Faculties and schools must ensure that programmes and units conform to the structure of the academic year as laid out by Senate (see: [www.bristol.ac.uk/academicregistry/office/policies/say](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academicregistry/office/policies/say)).

Units should not span more than one academic year. A unit may only be scheduled to run outside of the agreed structure where there are good pedagogic reasons so to do and subject to approval by Education Committee.

### ***Levels of study***

- 3.13 The following levels of credit are used by the University:
- level 3 units that may be considered as alternatives to A levels; they are normally pre-requisites to level 4 units and feature in pathway programmes,
  - level 4 units that are normally taken as part of the first year of an undergraduate programme,
  - level 5 units that are normally taken as part of the second, third or final year of an undergraduate programme.
  - level 6 units that are normally taken as part of the third or final year of an undergraduate programme.
  - level 7 units that are normally taken as part of the final year of a master's or integrated master's programme or the year abroad.

### ***Credit***

- 3.14 The University's credit framework, which summarises the amount and level of credit required to receive a University award, is reproduced on the following page. The credit requirements for students first registered on programmes in, and after, 2010-11 is set out in the table. The credit requirements for students who first registered on their current programme of study prior to 2010-11 can be viewed in previous versions of this Code, see: [www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/).
- 3.15 The amount and level of credit specified in the tables should be regarded as the minimum. If a school wishes to diverge from these amounts, the faculty must seek University level approval, through the University Education Committee.

**3.16 Credit requirements for students first registered on programmes of study in and after 2010-11:**

Qualification	FHEQ Level	Previous UOB Level	Total credits required	Minimum credits required at the highest level*	Equivalent ECTS credits	Additional credit requirements
Taught Master's degree (including the Integrated Master's degree)	7	M	At least 180	150	The minimum requirement is 60, however, a range of 90-120 is more typical.	The total credit requirement for the Integrated Master's programme is 480 credits, with at least 120 at the level of the qualification (7/M).
Postgraduate Diploma	7	M	At least 120	90		Remaining credits to be at level C/4 or higher
Postgraduate Certificate (including the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE))	7	M	At least 60	40		
Bachelor's degree with honours	6	H	At least 360	90	180 - 240	Remaining credits to include at least 100 at level I/5 or above
Bachelor's degree (Ordinary degree)	6	H	At least 300	60		
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	6	H	At least 60	40		
Graduate Diploma	6	H	At least 80	80		
Graduate Certificate	6	H	At least 40	40		
Foundation Degree	5	I	At least 240	90		
Diploma of Higher Education in (Faculty name) (Subject)**	5	I	At least 240	90	Approx. 120	Remaining credits at level C/4 or above.
Certificate of Higher Education in (Faculty name) (Subject)**	4	C	At least 120	120		
Pathway Certificate in (Faculty name) (Subject name where appropriate)**	3	NQF level 3	At least 120	120		

\* The highest level is the level of the qualification

\*\* A structured programme in a single discipline or approved combination of disciplines; may be awarded with Distinction.



**Notes:**

- 1) This table should be read in conjunction with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the Higher Education Credit Framework for England (August 2008). The University's credit framework will apply in cases where the credit requirement is higher than that stated in the national credit framework.
- 2) The MB,ChB (Medicine), BDS (Dentistry) and BVSc (Veterinary Science) undergraduate programmes are not included in the University's modular structure and therefore do not have credit points attached to them.
- 3) At the discretion of the faculty joint honours degrees may vary from the minimum of 90 credits at level 6 because of the need for more flexible structures in joint programmes.
- 4) Individual students can take units at a higher level than normally specified during their programme, e.g. a level 7 unit might be substituted for a level 6 unit, or a level 6 unit might replace one at level 5.
- 5) The University's qualifications relate to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA) as follows:

Doctoral degrees	Third Cycle Qualifications (Not typically credit rated)
Master's degrees	Second Cycle Qualifications (Min. 60 ECTS credits, however a range of 90-120 ECTS credits is typical)
Integrated Master's degrees	Second Cycle Qualifications (As above)
Bachelor's degrees with Honours	First Cycle Qualifications (180-240 ECTS credits)
Foundation degrees	Short Cycle Qualifications (120 ECTS credits)
Diplomas of Higher Education	As above

### ***Credit points***

- 3.17 In assigning credit points to units, faculties and schools are required to use total student input per normal full-time year of study as a measure. An average of 40 hours per week of total student input in teaching time is suggested as an appropriate measure of the time an average student will need to spend to be able to complete the assessment for a programme successfully. One credit point represents approximately 10 notional hours of student input.
- 3.18 The normal requirement for each full-time year of undergraduate study is not less than 120 credit points and not more than 130. The University does not encourage students to take more than the required units for the programme. However, if a student chooses to do so they will be required to pay a fee for the additional units and neither the credit nor the marks accumulated will count towards their final award.
- The attainment of additional credit points in any curriculum year cannot be carried forward in such a way as to reduce the volume of credit that must be taken in any succeeding year, or to accelerate a student's progress towards any award.
- 3.19 A unit shared by students studying on more than one programme must always be allocated the same credit points.
- 3.20 Credit points may be used once only and may not be used towards two or more awards of this University or of another institution and the University, with the exceptions as specified in clauses 7.9 and 7.10 (undergraduate) and point 8.5 (taught postgraduate)
- 3.21 It is the responsibility of the relevant Faculty Board of Examiners to determine whether or not a student has satisfied the criteria for the award of credit points.

### ***Shared teaching between undergraduates and postgraduates***

- 3.22 Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students may be taught together. If undergraduate and taught postgraduate students undertake the same unit, with the same learning outcomes and assessment, the credit awarded will be at the pre-defined level of the unit. If the learning outcomes and assessment differ for the undergraduate and postgraduate students then they are deemed to be undertaking different units; such units must have been previously approved at the different levels.

## **4. Undergraduate Modular Programmes**

- 4.1 Undergraduate programmes may be a single honours unitary degree or a joint honours degree devoting approximately equal time to two subjects or a major/minor combination where the minor subject accounts for at least a quarter of the programme.
- 4.2 For each joint honours programme, one of the contributing schools must own the programme and apply the relevant regulations as set out in this document. For programmes that span faculties the programme committee must decide the 'home' school, and therefore faculty ownership, guided by the balance of the programme content and emphasis.
- 4.3 The degrees of BA, BSc, BEng, LLB, may be awarded with honours or as ordinary degrees. Names of successful candidates for honours shall be arranged as follows: first class honours; second class honours in two divisions and third class honours. The names of successful candidates for the ordinary degrees shall be listed separately.

- 4.4 The degrees of MSci, MLibArts and MEng may be awarded with honours, as follows: first class honours and second class honours in two divisions.

### **Integrated Master's**

- 4.5 Integrated Master's degrees must state in their programme specifications whether they are of the advanced study type (type II as defined by the QAA), professional type (type III) and/or has a formal period of study abroad / in industry.
- 4.6 Integrated Master's degrees will have an exit award of a Bachelor's Honours degree at the end of the third year of study, in accordance with the University's credit framework. Where the exit award for the integrated masters has the same title as a free-standing degree also awarded by the University, students leaving with the exit award must have completed the same or directly equivalent programme learning outcomes as graduates from the free-standing programme.
- 4.7 If independent study (e.g. project or dissertation) is a faculty requirement for the award of a degree, schools should ensure that any students who graduate with an exit award of a Bachelor's Honours degree have completed the designated independent study, constituting a unit of at least 20 credits units at level 6.
- 4.8 Where exit awards are not professionally accredited, students must be informed of this prior to the start of the second year of study.

### **Student choice**

- 4.9 Full time students on undergraduate degree programmes will normally have the opportunity to broaden their education by taking units outside of their subject discipline (i.e. 'open units') worth at least 20 credit points across the programme, except where this is not practicable, for example, due to professional accreditation reasons.
- 4.10 Faculties and schools will determine the point during a student's career at which open units may be taken. Faculties and schools may specify to its students which open units are most appropriate for them to take.
- 4.11 Students do not have a right to take any particular unit as an open unit and should not undertake an open unit in which they are already proficient. The availability of any particular unit is subject to practical constraints such as space in teaching rooms or laboratories and timetabling. Subject to these constraints, students may also seek to take a unit (or units), which has not been flagged as being an 'open unit'.
- 4.12 Students are not required to take open units. If they wish, and subject to the programme structure and practical constraints described in 4.11, they can take the 20 credit points set aside for open units in their honours subject(s).

## **5. Undergraduate Modular Programmes with Study Abroad**

- 5.1 The common University policy on the study abroad period applies to those undergraduate modular programmes where either:
- An identified requisite of the programme is for a student to study abroad for an academic year for the award of credit, hereafter known as the 'Year Abroad'. The accomplishment of the study abroad element is reflected in the title of the programme (e.g. MSci Chemistry with Study Abroad or MSci Chemistry with Study in Continental Europe).
  - A student is permitted to study at another institution for credit in lieu of the units that the student would normally have taken at Bristol (i.e. a 'Teaching Block

Abroad'). Such arrangements are not an integral part of a programme but are recognised in the student's transcript.

All other arrangements, where students study abroad for experiential reasons (i.e. not for credit), are not covered by this policy.

### ***Principles for the studying abroad process***

#### *All formal arrangements for studying abroad*

- 5.2 Where the learning from any period of formal study undertaken outside of the UK is a required part of the programme, how the intended learning outcomes of the programme are met must be identified.
- 5.3 Any formal period of study abroad must be credit-bearing and contribute to the award of the programme and consequently the degree classification (i.e. and therefore not pass/fail).
- 5.4 Any mark(s) from a period of study abroad may be reached, solely or in combination, by assessment set by the University of Bristol (i.e. by assessing what a student has learnt during their experience) or by the translation of marks that have been gained at the partner institution.
- 5.5 Where the mark is obtained by a combination of assessments set by Bristol and the partner institution, the weighting of the constituent marks and the expected input of the student to each component must be agreed and clear to all parties.
- 5.6 Schools should ensure that students are fully aware of the academic arrangements for any period of study abroad prior to the student committing him or herself to it.
- 5.7 A tutor within each School must maintain regular contact with a student undertaking a study abroad arrangement, whilst they are away from the University (see 11.12)

#### *'Year Abroad' only*

- 5.8 The Year Abroad should only be undertaken in the third year of a four-year (Bachelor's or Integrated Master's) programme. It is not expected that students will undertake an entire year of study away from the University as part of a three-year Bachelor's programme.
- 5.9 The Year Abroad must be set at the level of study appropriate to the programme and in alignment with the University's credit framework.
- 5.10 The Year Abroad equates to 60 ECTS and 120 credit points at the University of Bristol.
- 5.11 Students must undertake at least the equivalent of 100, and no more than 120, credit points of units during the Year Abroad. All the marks gained in these units will count towards the mark for the Year Abroad, unless there is a specific rationale for an alternative approach, which must be applied to the entire cohort of students. Any further study may be in units unrelated to the subject and, in such cases, will not count towards the mark for the Year Abroad.
- 5.12 A student's performance will be reflected by a single overall mark for the learning undertaken across the year, unless the programme is structured so that students are assessed at differing levels of study during their Year Abroad. Only the overall unit mark should be considered when determining progression from year to year at the University of Bristol.
- 5.13 The Study Abroad year will be weighted as 10% of the overall programme mark for the purposes of degree classification (see annex 14).

### *'Teaching Block Abroad' only*

- 5.14 Studying abroad for a teaching block must not be undertaken in the student's first or final year of their programme of study.
- 5.15 Normally a teaching block undertaken at a partner institution outside of the UK will equate to 30 ECTS and 60 credit points at the University of Bristol.
- 5.16 A student's performance should be reflected by individual marks, equivalent to the units a student would have undertaken in their registered programme of study at the University of Bristol. These unit marks will contribute to the calculation of the year mark, final programme mark and degree classification, as normal.
- 5.17 If a student fails a 'must-pass' unit (i.e. deemed by the faculty to be a core part of the programme) during a Teaching Block Abroad, a re-sit should be arranged at the University of Bristol.

### ***Process for the translation of marks gained from study abroad***

- 5.18 Given the variation in structures and standards in the marking process in institutions and across countries outside of the UK, some translation or mapping of the marks to the equivalent standards of the University, as a UK higher education institution, may be required.

The University has adopted an evidence-based approach for converting marks gained from studying abroad, in the form of a common marks conversion table (available from: [www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/year-abroad/study/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/year-abroad/study/)), based upon the following principles:

- A single translation for each country, unless evidence indicates this is not appropriate, using the ECTS translation tables.
  - Where there is evidence a country-based approach is not appropriate, an institution wide approach should be adopted, i.e. presume that the institution is internally consistent, unless there is actual evidence this is not the case.
  - Only where there is actual evidence of inconsistency in marking should we have different disciplinary rules within a single institution.
  - Variation from that table should only occur where there are extenuating circumstances in particular cases, although extenuating circumstances may be contextualised differently when students are studying in another country.
- 5.19 For the **Year Abroad** - the overall mark will be calculated by averaging all the contributing weighted marks from the host institution and, if necessary, any weighted marks awarded by the University of Bristol. If the partner institution uses a linear marking scale, the translation provided in the Reference Table is then applied to the overall mark. If the partner institution does not use a linear marking scale, each of the individual marks should be translated before being averaged.
- 5.20 The translation of the overall mark must be mapped onto the 0-100 scale, so to conform to the University's procedures for determining student progression and degree classification, unless it is necessary to use a different marking scale, whereby the processing of marks from the study abroad period will be conducted using the 0-100 scale and then translated to the nearest point on the alternative marking scale.
- 5.21 The mark(s) awarded, following translation, for the study abroad period should be reviewed to ensure that it is robust.
- 5.22 The translation and subsequent review of the marks are the responsibility of the School Study Abroad Co-ordinator, or equivalent.

- 5.23 The relevant Board of Examiners that considers the marks retains discretion to adjust the marks from those shown in the Conversion Table where there is evidence that the marks gained from the host institution is not an accurate reflection of the student's performance.
- 5.24 The translation algorithm of marks for any new partnership arrangement for study abroad should be checked against those provided in the Conversion Table and confirmed before the agreement is signed.
- 5.25 The University's official transcript will show the University of Bristol translated mark from the study abroad period.

### ***Exceptions***

- 5.26 Where there is a good academic reason to request an exception from one or more of the principles, the programme director should make a case to the relevant Faculty Education Director well in advance of the commencement of any arrangements for a student to study abroad. If the Faculty Education Director approves the case, it will be presented to the University Undergraduate Studies Committee for incorporation into the Conversion Table.

## **6. Taught Postgraduate Programme - Master of Research (MRes)**

- 6.1 The MRes is a taught postgraduate degree. Its main aim is to provide a structured research training programme which can act as a foundation for doctoral study or for a research career outside academia. It may also be used to provide an exit award from a doctoral programme which includes a taught component.
- 6.2 An MRes will comprise 180 credit points, and include a research component of between 60 and 120 credit points at level 7.
- 6.3 All MRes programmes will provide an exit award of a Postgraduate Certificate (with the attainment of 60 credit points). If the structure of the taught component permits, MRes programmes will also provide an exit award of a Postgraduate Diploma (with the attainment of 120 credit points).
- 6.4 Successful completion of the taught component of an MRes is normally required for progression to the research component. The relevant Board of Examiners may permit a student to start the research component before the assessment of the taught component is complete.

## C. ADMISSION AND STUDY

The 'Student Agreement' sets out the terms and conditions that form the basis of the relationship between the student and the University, see:

[www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/studentrulesregs/agreement.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/studentrulesregs/agreement.html).

### 7. Undergraduate Programmes

- 7.1 To be eligible for admission to a programme of study candidates shall have such qualifications as Senate shall determine.
- Most candidates for admission to the University will be at least 18 years old on entry. If a candidate is selected who will be under 18 years of age on admission, such admission shall be conditional on a declaration by the Academic Registrar or nominee that satisfactory arrangements have been made for the student's accommodation and pastoral care, in accordance with the *University's Policy on the Safeguarding of Children and Other Vulnerable Groups* (see [www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/legal/cppolicy.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/legal/cppolicy.html)).
- 7.2 No student shall be permitted to register and be admitted to any programme of study at the start of any academic year if that student:
- has failed to satisfy the academic requirements of the programme for the previous year of study, as outlined in the regulations for the progression of students on taught programmes; or
  - is in debt to the University in respect of tuition or other ancillary fees, accommodation fees or fines properly imposed for breach of any University regulation, unless specific arrangements have been agreed with the University for the settlement of the debt; or
  - is suspended.
- 7.3 The consent of the Faculty Board shall be necessary for the admission of a student to any assessment and to each part of a programme. Each programme is governed by the University Examination Regulations (see annex 5).
- 7.4 Each student shall attend such lectures, discussion periods, tutorials, practical classes, design classes, fieldwork, vacation courses and any other educational activities, as described in the programme specification, and shall undertake such written and other work as may be required. Each student shall also attend, as an integral part of the programme, such work placements, vacation courses and fieldwork as are defined in the programme and are required of her/him. Each student shall also undertake any professional requirements, as described in the programme specification. Each student shall undertake such assessments as are arranged.
- 7.5 The failure of any student to show satisfactory progress on the programme, including failure in summative assessment, failure to obtain credit points or to attend regularly any prescribed part of a programme (including such lectures, discussion periods, tutorial and practical classes, fieldwork, design classes and vacation courses as may be required) or to undertake prescribed written or other work or to present himself or herself for any examination or to reach a satisfactory standard in any assessment or any part or parts of an assessment, shall be reported to the Faculty Board which may at any time, if it thinks fit, require the student concerned to repeat part of a programme or to retake an assessment or to withdraw from a unit or units or the whole programme in accordance with the University regulations on student progression.

Any student who has been required to withdraw shall be informed in writing of the decision and of the University procedures for making representations against the decision.

- 7.6 The Faculty Board of Examiners shall determine whether a candidate, on completion of the programme including the final assessment, has obtained the required number of credit points for the award of a degree, diploma or certificate. The class of the degree will be determined in accordance with the University regulations on degree classification.
- 7.7 A student who has obtained 120 credit points at level 4 or above but who either does not proceed to undertake further units or does not satisfactorily complete further units may, if his or her faculty has made provision, be awarded a Certificate of Higher Education. Similarly, a candidate registered for a higher award who has obtained 240 credit points at appropriate levels may, if his or her faculty has made provision, be awarded a Diploma of Higher Education (see the University's Credit Framework in section 3 for more details).

For the purposes of the Intercalated Degree of BSc in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry or the Faculty of Medical and Veterinary Sciences, or the BA in Medical Humanities in the Faculty of Arts, the first two years of the MB,ChB, BDS or BVSc programme shall each be deemed to be each worth 120 credit points.

- 7.8 Study and assessment carried out under the supervision of the University, or in another institution approved by Senate, and the credit points obtained from there may be accepted towards the fulfilment of the requirements of a particular programme.

In every case, except where there is a specific agreement with another institution that has been approved by Senate or in the case of the BSc (Hons) in Social Work with Children and Young People or the BSc (Hons) in Professional Practice with Children and Young People, a candidate for a degree programme must take and satisfactorily complete University of Bristol units which comprise the final 120 credit points of the programme.

- 7.9 Save as specified below credit points may be used once only and may not be used towards two or more undergraduate awards of this University or of another institution and this University. The exceptions are:
- a) with the consent of Senate, where an award at one level may be subsumed into an award at a higher level;
  - b) with the consent of Senate, where a University award or award of another institution has independent standing as a professional qualification and is accredited by a professional body;
  - c) where a medical, dental or veterinary student of this University intercalates a year of study for the degree of BSc or BA in this University or elsewhere, or where a medical, dental or veterinary student from another institution intercalates a year of study for the degree of BSc or BA in this University.
- 7.10 No student who is registered for a programme of full-time study leading to a qualification of the University of Bristol may concurrently be registered on a programme of full-time study leading to the award of a qualification of another institution.
- 7.11 The University does not encourage students to take more than the required units for any programme. However, if a student chooses to do so they will be required to pay a fee for the additional units and neither the credit nor the marks accumulated will count towards their final award.



7.12 Students may be permitted to transfer between programmes subject to approval, but there is no automatic right of transfer between programmes. Transfer is subject to sufficient space being available and the applicant meeting the academic criteria and requirements for the new programme. See annex 6 for the University's policy on student transfer between undergraduate programmes and units of the University.

7.13 Subject to Ordinance 15, the following table shows the normal and maximum periods of study for full-time undergraduate awards covered by these regulations. These periods of study include extensions but exclude suspensions of study. Periods of study for part-time students shall be calculated pro-rata to the periods of full-time study.

Title of Award	Period of Study	
	Normal	Maximum
Professional degrees (BDS, BVSc, MB,ChB)	5 academic years*	7 academic years
Integrated (5-year) Master's degree (e.g. with a Year Abroad/in Industry)	5 academic years	6 academic years
Integrated 4-year Master's Degree	4 academic years	5 academic years
Honours Bachelor's (4-year) Degree	4 academic years	5 academic years
Honours Bachelor's (3-year) Degree	3 academic years	4 academic years
Honours Bachelor's Degree that requires study abroad or in industry (i.e. away from the University) for one academic year	4 academic years	5 academic years
Honours Bachelor's Degree by Intercalation	1 academic year	1 academic year
Ordinary Degree	2 ½ academic years	4 academic years
Foundation Degree	2 academic years	4 academic years
Undergraduate Diploma of Higher Education	2 academic years	3 academic years
Undergraduate Certificate of Higher Education	1 academic year	1 academic year
Pathway Certificate (single subject)	1 academic year	See relevant programme specification
Preliminary Certificate (combined studies)	1 academic year	n/a

\* with the exception of graduate entry onto the MB,ChB, which is 4 years for those with a suitable undergraduate degree.

## 8. Taught Postgraduate Programmes

### ***Selection and admission***

- 8.1 Selection of students for taught postgraduate programmes must be in accordance with the University's Admissions Principles and Procedures for Postgraduate Taught Programmes: [www.bristol.ac.uk/university/governance/policies/admissions/taught-pg.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/governance/policies/admissions/taught-pg.html)

### ***Registration***

- 8.2 Students must register at the beginning of each academic year for which credit is being sought and pay the relevant tuition fee. Continuing students in debt to the University will not be permitted to re-register or progress until the debt is settled.
- 8.3 No student registered for a programme of full-time study leading to a qualification of the University of Bristol may be registered concurrently on a programme of full or part-time study leading to the award of a qualification at this or another institution.
- 8.4 Students on some taught postgraduate programmes may be permitted to register initially for a postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate, subject to faculty approval.
- 8.5 Graduates of the University in receipt of a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma award may be permitted by the faculty to re-register for the taught or research component (and to pay the relevant fee) for a Master's degree, normally within the programme's maximum study period or, where applicable, as part of the University's procedures for recognising prior learning (see section 10). In such cases, on successful completion of the Master's award, the Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma will be subsumed into the higher award.

### ***Period of study***

- 8.6 The period of study commences when the student is first registered for the degree programme. Students are expected to complete their programme within the specified normal period of study and must not exceed the maximum study period.
- 8.7 The maximum study period normally only applies to students who are undergoing re-assessment.
- 8.8 The following table shows the normal and maximum periods of study for taught postgraduate degrees. These periods of study include extensions but exclude suspensions of study.

Title of award	Student mode of attendance	Normal study period	Maximum study period
<b>Postgraduate Certificate</b> 60 credit points	Full-time	Not less than 15 weeks' study	6 months
	Part-time	6 months	12 months
	Part-time variable	Not applicable	Not more than three years' study
<b>Postgraduate Diploma</b> 120 credit points	Full-time	Not less than 31 weeks' study	12 months
	Part-time	6 months	24 months
	Part-time variable	Not applicable	Not more than three years' study
<b>Master's degree by intercalation</b> 180 credit points	Full-time	12 months	12 months
<b>Master's degree</b> 180 credit points	Full-time	12 months	24 months
	Part-time	24 months	36 months
	Part-time variable	Not applicable	Not more than five years' study*
<b>MA in Law</b> 240 credit points	Full-time	24 months	Not more than three years' study
<b>MSc in Social Work</b> 300 credit points	Full-time	24 months	Not more than three years' study
<b>PGCE</b> (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) 60 credit points	Full-time	12 months	Not more than three years' study.

*\*Not more than eight years study for part-time variable students on the MSc in Teaching and Learning for Health Professionals and the Master in Laws (LLM) by Advanced Study.*

### **School Responsibilities**

8.9 Schools will ensure that:

- a) At the commencement of their period of study, students are given the opportunity to meet key teaching and support staff, and other students on the programme.
- b) Students are provided with induction/orientation information in electronic or paper format to include a detailed induction programme, a timetable and calendar of key academic events. Students should also receive a copy of the University and Faculty Student Handbook or be directed to the online versions.
- c) Students receive appropriate handbooks (for the programme, unit/s and dissertation), outlining programme requirements and academic standards, contact details of key staff and their office hours/weekly availability and sources of academic and pastoral help and sources of general and skills training. Students should also be

given access to general and discipline specific careers advice. Health and Safety training should be provided by schools as appropriate.

- d) Students on professional programmes receive information on any professional requirements, including any compulsory practical, clinical or professional placements and fitness to practice procedures. Additional professional and clinical skills and competency requirements will be specified in full in programme specifications and handbooks.
- e) Teaching staff have expertise in the subject area and that students can interact with a range of appropriate teaching staff on their programme of study.
- f) The learning environment is suitable for a diverse student body, including disabled students, international students or students working in professional employment who do not often visit the University campus, whether they are studying full-time, part-time or on a part-time variable basis.
- g) Students are made aware of the facilities available to them during their studies (e.g. library, office/laboratory/workshop space), and of any requirements for their use. Students working remotely, including those 'writing up' their dissertation (or equivalent), should be given access to appropriate facilities and resources to support their study, including those available electronically.
- h) If a student is required to participate in a professional or industrial placement, the School will ensure that the student has access to appropriate facilities, information and support while on the placement. Organisers of student placements must be familiar with the University's 'Guidelines on Student Placements in Taught Programmes' ([www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/studentlearning/placements/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/studentlearning/placements/)).

### ***Student Entitlements***

8.10 Taught postgraduate students can expect:

- a) Information on tuition fees, registration, induction, the timetable and staff office hours/availability.
- b) Information on programme and unit content and requirements and how academic progress towards the award is monitored.
- c) Adequate opportunities to meet their personal tutor and/or programme director (as applicable), unit directors and dissertation supervisor(s) for informal and formal discussions about academic progress or pastoral matters.
- d) Information on the return of required written work, with formative feedback, within an agreed time scale (typically three weeks for full-time students, unless exceptional circumstances arise, in which case students will be informed of the deadline).
- e) Access to a learning infrastructure that supports their academic progress and their ability to complete the degree successfully within the required time period. Where relevant, details of appropriate language courses should be provided, bearing in mind the challenge of taking a language course while committed to a full-time programme of study
- f) Access to an appropriate learning environment, (in the University or collaborating institutions) within which there is relevant and sufficient expertise and appropriate facilities available to support the programme of study.
- g) Information about the support and guidance available at School/Faculty/University level (e.g. student handbooks, student web pages), including information on

complaints and appeals procedures and information on student representation procedures at School/ Faculty/University level and on student feedback opportunities

### **Student Responsibilities**

8.11 Taught postgraduate students are expected to:

- a) Register with the University at the start of the academic session, ensuring that they are registered on the correct units with sufficient credit points for the programme.
- b) Pay the required tuition fee and ensure that they have the necessary financial support to enable completion of the programme
- c) Take responsibility for their own personal and professional development and academic progress, making the most of those learning opportunities that will enhance their capacity for independent and 'self-directed' learning.
- d) Meet the University's requirements for good academic conduct, including timely submission of assessed work by the set deadline, attending at meetings with unit directors and dissertation supervisor(s) as required, attend lectures, seminars and practical sessions regularly and take an active part in the programme of study.
- e) Maintain effective working relationships with teaching staff (programme director, personal tutor, unit directors, dissertation supervisor) and other students, treating all with respect and consideration. Students on professionally-recognised vocational programmes are additionally expected to maintain standards of conduct commensurate with professional practice standards.
- f) Maintain academic integrity, acknowledging fully the work of others in their coursework and assessed work, and be familiar with the referencing conventions of the discipline or programme, so that their work is free from plagiarism.
- g) Notify the University of any disability, extenuating circumstance or support needs that may affect their study or performance in assessments, in line with these Regulations and Code of Practice.
- h) Notify the University of changes in their personal information (teaching time/home addresses, telephone numbers) immediately by updating their personal details online at <https://www.bris.ac.uk/studentinfo/>.
- i) Notify their programme director of any potential change in circumstance (requests for a change in mode of attendance, suspension of study, resumption of study, extension of study, programme transfer or withdrawal) in good time.
- j) Be familiar with, and comply with, University Regulations and Guidelines including: these Regulations and Code of Practice, relevant programme regulations, the Rules and Regulations for Students (including the University's Intellectual Property Policy for Students: [www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/studentrulesregs/intelprop.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/studentrulesregs/intelprop.html)) and the Examination Regulations (including sections on plagiarism and cheating).
- k) Be familiar with relevant University rules on health and safety, data protection, research ethics and confidentiality and the norms of good research practice applicable to their disciplinary area.
- l) International students with visa / immigration queries must only discuss these with the specially trained staff based in the International Advice and Support team. These staff can also provide general support and guidance to international students.

### ***Monitoring of the progress of taught postgraduate students***

- 8.12 Faculties should monitor the progress of taught postgraduate students at boards of examiners meetings and as part of Annual Programme Review.
- 8.13 The University expects informal monitoring of student progress within 2 - 3 months of initial registration. Practice may vary according to the discipline, student cohort or mode of study. Schools will make it clear in their handbooks which method is used.
- 8.14 Monitoring of student progress normally includes monitoring of attendance on units and performance in seminars and may also include informal evaluations of a student's progress in a unit/programme.
- 8.15 Informal reviews of student progress will help ensure that the student is in a position to overcome practical or academic hurdles to progress and will enable the student to discuss any concerns about progress with the unit/dissertation supervisor. The student should see and comment on any written report made about his/her progress.
- 8.16 All *part-time variable* students, defined here as students on non-standard professional programmes who are studying part-time, typically less than 0.5 FTE\*, must register for, and engage with, a minimum of one unit per academic year. The programme director and faculty graduate education director must approve any exceptional cases where a student is unable to meet this requirement. A student who does not take at least one unit per year and who does not have an approved exemption will be required to withdraw from his/her studies.
- (\*This regulation does not apply to taught postgraduate students who are designated *part-time variable* purely because they are undertaking a Supplementary Year.)
- 8.17 Part-time variable students should receive timely feedback on their progress in each unit from the unit director, normally in advance of commencing study on another unit. Guidance should be provided in school handbooks.

### ***The Dissertation***

- 8.18 For most postgraduate Master's awards, a dissertation worth 60 credit points is required. Postgraduate Master's awards with an enhanced research component normally require dissertation/s worth 90 to 120 credit points. Dissertation requirements are outlined in annex 16 'Dissertations in Taught Postgraduate Programmes' and in individual programme specifications.
- 8.19 The dissertation/research project must normally be submitted by 8 September. Faculties may alter this deadline date for part-time or professional Master's programmes. Information on submission procedures and submission deadlines are published in faculty and/or school handbooks.
- 8.20 The dissertation must be a student's own work. A student may not include in any dissertation (or equivalent), material previously submitted and approved for an award of a degree at this or any other university.
- 8.21 **School responsibilities concerning the dissertation:**
- a) To assign each student a dissertation supervisor by the start of the dissertation.
  - b) To provide students with information and guidance on the dissertation process. Students may receive information in a school handbook, in a dissertation workshop, seminar, work session or via Blackboard.
  - c) To inform students of how formative feedback will be provided on the draft section(s) of the dissertation.

- d) To provide students with relevant legal and regulatory information and guidance e.g. health and safety, research ethics, copyright, data protection, plagiarism, criminal records bureau check procedures.
- e) If a student's research requires a period working away from the University, the School should ensure that appropriate supervisory/personal tutor arrangements, understood by the student, are in place to cover these periods.
- f) To inform students of the independent sources of help/advice that are available should a problem arise during the dissertation process, e.g. programme director, personal tutor.
- g) In schools where a dissertation or research project has a placement element or a student spends time at a company location, the dissertation supervisor and the safety officer will seek to ensure student safety by ensuring that the company has a safety code of practice. Organisers of placements must be familiar with the University's Guidelines on Student Placements in Taught Programmes ([www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/studentlearning/placements/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/studentlearning/placements/)).

#### 8.22 Dissertation supervisor's responsibilities

- a) To be aware of and understand University policies and procedures.
- b) To be knowledgeable about the general or specific research area of the student's dissertation so as to provide guidance on the nature of the dissertation and the standard of work expected.
- c) To advise on the planning of the dissertation; to discuss the timetable and dates for completion of different stages.
- d) To advise the student on training necessary for completion of the dissertation, e.g. statistical or software courses which may include referral to other sources of help and advice. To advise on techniques, research methods, research ethics and other relevant issues (e.g. criminal records check procedures, intellectual property), and to encourage the student to become aware of recent developments in the research area.
- e) To supervise and maintain contact with the student through meetings, email or telephone contact where appropriate (e.g. when a student is working on a placement away from Bristol) as detailed in school handbooks.
- f) To propose adequate arrangements for supervision of students during study leave (or unavoidable absence) to the Programme Director or Head of School, as applicable.
- g) The dissertation supervisor will not proof-read or edit the work. In programmes where a specified proportion of the draft dissertation may be read by the dissertation supervisor, s/he may comment on the following as applicable: dissertation or report structure, content of sections, research sources and methodology, referencing and style.
- h) Where re-assessment of the dissertation is permitted by the Board of Examiners, the dissertation supervisor will ensure that the student understands the feedback given by the examiners and knows what is required for re-submission. The student can normally expect at least one meeting with their supervisor to clarify these points, and can expect the supervisor to read and comment on one revised draft prior to re-submission.

### 8.23 Student's responsibilities during the dissertation

- a) To agree a suitable dissertation topic with their dissertation supervisor and to work on a research plan in consultation with that supervisor.
- b) To attend dissertation workshops and seminars (where provided) and be familiar with relevant school information on the dissertation process.
- c) To agree a schedule of meetings with their dissertation supervisor at the start of the process, initiate meetings, attend all scheduled meetings and presentations and remain in contact during the period of the dissertation.
- d) To be responsible for their own progress with the dissertation, keeping their dissertation supervisor informed of their overall progress, raising any problems they are having with the dissertation with their dissertation supervisor at the earliest opportunity. To work on their dissertation taking account of advice and guidance and submit work by set deadlines.
- e) To ensure that ethical or statutory checks are carried out early in the dissertation process so that the progress of their research is not delayed. Criminal records bureau, research ethics or intellectual property checks or approval may take weeks/months to complete.
- f) Where required by the school, to provide the dissertation supervisor with a draft section of the dissertation by the specified deadline, in accordance with school dissertation guidelines.
- g) To be responsible for the quality and standard of their own work. They should proof-read the final draft, ensure it is legible and check that both citation and referencing have been done to the required standard.
- h) To submit the dissertation within the normal study period for the programme
- i) Where the Board of Examiners permits re-assessment of the dissertation, the student must take account of the feedback from examiners to improve the re-submitted work.

### ***Feedback Opportunities***

8.24 Taught postgraduates may provide feedback on their experiences through their student representatives on school staff/student liaison committees, through 'end of programme' and unit questionnaires as well as providing their views during School Reviews. At faculty level they may express their views through student representatives on relevant faculty committees and by providing feedback on their experiences to Faculty Quality Enhancement Teams. At University level there are student representatives on University Undergraduate Studies Committee, University Graduate Studies Committee, Education Committee, Senate, Student Affairs Committee and Council.

## **9. Intercalation**

- 9.1 'Intercalation' is defined as the circumstance in which a student takes up the opportunity to pause his or her study on a registered programme to study for a degree in a different programme of study. The student resumes, as normal, on their registered programme following the intercalation.
- 9.2 Only students registered at the University of Bristol on the following programmes are eligible to intercalate:
  - Dentistry (BDS)



Medicine (MBChB)

Veterinary Science (BVSc)

- 9.3 Only those taught degree programmes of the University of Bristol that have been specifically designated and approved can accept intercalating students. A register of the designated programmes will be held centrally.
- 9.4 Any programme, which wishes to start to accept intercalating students, should follow the normal procedure for a major change to a programme, explicitly stating the rationale for accepting intercalating students in the approval documentation.
- 9.5 Requests for intercalation from students of the University will be at the discretion of both the director of the programme from which the student is intercalating (i.e. whether intercalation is suitable for a particular student) and the director of the programme onto which the student wishes to intercalate (i.e. whether a student meets the requirements of the programme and there is sufficient space to accommodate them).
- 9.6 Requests for intercalation from students of other institutions will be at the discretion of the programme director onto which the student wishes to intercalate.
- 9.7 A student may be permitted to intercalate onto a programme at a different institution provided there is a good academic reason for doing so.
- 9.8 Intercalation is normally undertaken subsequent to year 2 for entry onto the final year of a bachelor's degree programme and subsequent to year 3 for entry onto a taught master's degree programme.
- 9.9 The maximum period of study for an intercalating programme is one academic year; intercalation will be completed within the same academic year that it has commenced unless a student suspends studies and/or due to other accepted extenuating circumstances.
- 9.10 As stated (see 7.9), credit can be used towards the award of a student's registered programme and the degree programme on which the student intercalates.
- 9.11 For the purposes of the Intercalated Bachelor's Degree, the first two years of the MB,ChB, BDS or BVSc programme shall each be deemed to be each worth 120 credit points (see 7.7).
- 9.12 The final programme mark and degree classification of the Intercalated Degree, where appropriate, will be calculated purely on the marks achieved during the intercalated year of study (see annex 14).
- 9.13 The award of an intercalated bachelor's degree will be conferred at the next graduation ceremony following successful completion of the programme, except for an intercalated taught postgraduate degree programme where the award will be conferred at the same time as the completion of the registered programme.
- 9.14 Whilst undertaking an intercalated programme, the student will be subject to the relevant regulations for that programme.
- 9.15 The Academic Personal Tutor, or equivalent, from the home programme will continue to provide support whilst a student from the University of Bristol is intercalating (as referenced in 11.14). An Academic Personal Tutor will be assigned from the school within which the intercalating programme is based, if the student is intercalating from another institution.

## 10. Recognition of Prior Learning in Taught Programmes

### *Definitions*

- 10.1 The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL – previously known as ‘APL’) is a process whereby students can be exempt from some parts of their chosen programme of academic study by recognition of their learning from previous experiences or achievements.
- Recognising Prior 'Certified' Learning is the achievement of learning that has been formally assessed and certificated from previous study with a higher education organisation.
  - Recognising Prior 'Experiential' Learning is the non-certified acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge, gained through relevant experience, which is capable of being evaluated.
- 10.2 Some programmes have approved units/periods of study undertaken at another institution or in the workplace. Where this is a recognised part of an approved programme this policy does not apply.
- 10.3 The term ‘prior learning’ does not include the learning implicit in formal teaching, a work placement, group work or independent study designed as part of a programme of study alone. Recognition of such parallel learning would be expected to occur in the formal assessment practice of the programme.

### *Principles*

- 10.4 It is the achievement of learning, or outcomes of the learning, and not just the experience of the activities that is being accredited. In all cases evidence must be presented to the University that such learning has taken place.
- 10.5 Evidence for acceptance of RPL should demonstrate that the learner has a reasonable expectation of satisfactorily completing the programme for which they are applying.
- 10.6 Schools should ensure that any additional criteria, by which it judges applications for RPL, are transparent and accessible.
- 10.7 Acceptance of prior learning for credit purposes is at the discretion of the school, normally the relevant programme director, in consultation with the relevant Faculty Education Director, although prior learning will not normally be accepted if five or more years have elapsed since it occurred unless the applicant can provide evidence that his/her learning has continued in a professional or similar context. In such cases the school may choose to set an assessment to test an applicant's current knowledge.
- 10.8 To complement the University's credit framework (see section 3) the following table shows maximum amounts of credit for each type of programme that can be counted as prior learning.

The maximum amount of certified prior learning can be exceeded where a student is returning to undertake a ‘top-up’ qualification, provided that the lower award has been made by the University and is still relevant to the higher qualification.

<b>Award type</b>	<b>Number of credit points for award</b>	<b>Total amount of APL permitted</b>
Postgraduate Level Award		
Master's Degree	180	60
Postgraduate Diploma	120	40
Postgraduate Certificate	60	20
Undergraduate Level Award		
Graduate Diploma	120	40
Graduate Certificate	60	20
Integrated Master's Degree	480	240
Honours Bachelor's Degree	360	240
Ordinary Degree	300	180
Undergraduate Diploma	240	120
Undergraduate Certificate, Preliminary certificate, Pathway Certificate	120	0

10.9 The conferring of one of the awards listed in the table and the recognition of prior learning within this is complemented by the following:

- a) Sufficient credit at the highest level of the award, as outlined in the University's credit framework, must be taken at the University of Bristol (or, for a Joint Award, one of its partner institutions) in order for the award to be conferred.
- b) The final 120 credit points of an undergraduate degree programme must be taken and satisfactorily completed at the University of Bristol unless there is a specific agreement to the contrary that has been approved by Senate, therefore it follows that the University will not normally accredit prior learning within the final year of its bachelors and integrated master's programmes.
- c) The dissertation or research component of a taught postgraduate programme must be taken and satisfactorily completed at the University of Bristol (or, for a Joint Award, one of its partner institutions).

#### *Recognising Prior Certified Learning*

10.10 Schools should consider the learning which has been accredited at the other institution and decide, in the best interests of the student, how this can be taken into account. It is at the discretion of the school to decide if: (a) the subject content, and therefore knowledge gained, is sufficiently similar for a student to be exempt from unit(s), and (b) if marks can be transferred.

If a student wishes to recognise learning obtained from online courses, the school should seek advice from the relevant Faculty Education Director and the Academic Registrar.

10.11 Therefore, prior credit obtained from another institution can be recognised in one of two ways:

- (a) Exemption from units, the marks of which do not contribute to the final award and need not be transferred (University of Bristol accepts the credit awarded by another institution);
- (b) Exemption from units, the marks of which do contribute to the final award and are transferred (University of Bristol accepts the credit and marks awarded by another institution towards this award).

10.12 The requirement to transfer marks may be waived for students transferring into an undergraduate professional programme if there is still a significant proportion (e.g. 360 or more, out of 600 credit points) of the programme to complete.

### *Recognising Prior Experiential Learning*

10.13 Schools should consider each case and decide from which units the student can be exempt. The school should satisfy itself that the applicant has sufficient knowledge and ability to have a reasonable expectation of completing the programme successfully.

10.14 If a school is not satisfied that the experiential learning is equivalent to the standard of unit(s), it may require the applicant to undertake an appropriate method of assessment.

See annex 15 on how RPL is applied to the calculation of the final programme mark and/or the degree classification in modular undergraduate programmes.

## **11. Student Support – in undergraduate programmes**

*The policy applies to the support of undergraduate students on modular programmes. The spirit of this policy also applies for students on the undergraduate non-modular programmes (BVSc, BDS, MBChB) where the support requirements for students on these programmes may differ due to accrediting body requirements.*

*These specific arrangements are available in the online version of the Code, see: [www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/codeonline.html#studentsupport](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/codeonline.html#studentsupport)*

11.1 The aim of the University's model for undergraduate student support is to provide students with a productive, predictable and meaningful support experience, which also allows for the distinctive disciplinary traditions in the University to provide this support in a manner appropriate to their discipline. The key principles of the model are:

- That support is provided by those colleagues and in those forms which are best suited for their purpose;
- That the adopted support structure is efficient in terms of impact and delivery;
- That it enables staff and students to meet regularly and in conducive circumstances;
- That it is visible to all;
- That it forms a coherent and comprehensive whole.

11.2 The University, through its schools, specialist central services and Students' Union, will provide undergraduate students with an overall framework of support throughout their University lives, within which there are three elements:

- academic subject tutoring;
- academic personal tutoring;
- welfare support.

All three elements of the student support process should be viewed holistically and is principally the responsibility of academic members of staff in Schools. Heads of Schools are responsible for the process and the quality of the support provided.

11.3 Schools will ensure that the identified elements of support are fulfilled as a coherent whole. The support structure will be based upon the following defined functions:

- Academic Subject Tutor (i.e. the provision of subject-specific support within disciplinary teaching);
- Academic Personal Tutor\* (see 11.4);
- Senior Tutor\* (see 11.5).

*\* In the professional non-modular programmes, an alternative title may be appropriate.*

These roles do not necessarily have to be provided by different people and need not map directly onto the different elements of support, for example a Subject Tutor may also be a student's Personal Tutor.

11.4 The Academic Personal Tutor role will ensure there is someone who: knows the individual student by name; has a holistic view of his or her academic development; monitors their progress; and, provides access to appropriate individual advice at critical points in the student's University life to enable them to benefit from a liberal education. In order to fulfil these functions, there will be a regular programme of face-to-face contact between Academic Personal Tutors and their tutees.

11.5 The Senior Tutor role in each School will act as a focal point for School expertise in the process of supporting students and a person from whom the Academic Personal Tutor can consult and seek advice in particularly difficult cases. The role will provide an academic link with the central Student Support services, the International Office, the Students' Union and other agencies, such that students are appropriately referred onto expert services, where necessary. A 'Senior Tutor Network' will enable good practice across Schools and act as a conduit to the central Professional Services.

The Senior Tutor role will also lead upon the provision and quality assurance of student support in his or her School, including the operation of academic personal tutoring and will report annually on the operation of student support in their School.

11.6 As far as is possible, a student should have one Academic Personal Tutor providing the overview of his or her academic progress, throughout his or her studies. Where this is not possible, Schools should ensure that a change in Tutor is managed carefully and any disruption is kept to a minimum.

11.7 The role of Academic Personal Tutor can only be undertaken by a member of University staff and is considered a core responsibility for an academic member of University of Bristol staff on pathways 1 and 3.

11.8 In the case of students who may find it inappropriate or uncomfortable sharing problems with individuals they feel may be assessing their work or forming academic judgements of them, Schools will ensure that students are aware of alternative pathways for advice that offer students a choice of how to raise and discuss personal issues, such as: a designated member or members of support staff within the School, the Students' Union Advice Centre and/or one of the University's central Student Support services.

For this purpose, Schools will identify a member or members of support staff in each School as an alternate point of contact.

11.9 Schools must have a procedure to facilitate any request from a student to change their Personal Tutor, which is sensitive to the problems that this can create.

- 11.10 Schools will ensure that its model of student support is visible and that students are fully aware of the support opportunities that are available to them, particularly on first arrival at the University, at the start of each academic year and at key points during their programme of study. A system of recording the attendance of both Tutors and tutees should be established.
- 11.11 Whilst the University will ensure that students are aware of and have access to the support opportunities that are available, the onus is upon the student to engage with these opportunities, as necessary.

#### *Support arrangements in 'non-standard' programmes*

- 11.12 The School, in liaison with central Professional Services (i.e. the International Office), must have arrangements in place to support students who are registered but studying outside of the University, such as those students who undertake a formal study abroad period, placements in industry or if they have been granted a suspension of studies.
- A tutor within each School must maintain regular contact with students that study abroad or undertake a placement, whilst they are away from the University.
- 11.13 Students undertaking a joint honours programme must have an Academic Personal Tutor from the School that 'hosts' the programme to provide personal tutoring specifically relevant to the joint honours programme, who will liaise with the other School involved.
- 11.14 In the case of students who are 'intercalating', the 'host school' will provide subject tutoring for the intercalating period, whilst the home school will continue to offer support via the student's existing Academic Personal Tutor.

## **12. Student Absence due to Illness or Other Cause – in all taught programmes**

### *During the Teaching Period*

- 12.1 If a student is absent due to illness or other cause for **up to and including seven consecutive days** in the teaching period, he or she should inform their home school as soon as possible and complete an absence form (available from: [www.bristol.ac.uk/currentstudents/forms/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/currentstudents/forms/)).
- 12.2 If a student is absent due to illness or other cause for **more than seven consecutive days** in the teaching period, he or she should inform their home school as soon as possible and complete an extenuating circumstances form. Additional evidence for the absence may be required, e.g. if the absence is due to illness the student should also attend an appointment with a Medical Practitioner (e.g. a GP) (with the completed form) to obtain a medical certificate ('sick-note'). Both the form and any documented evidence must then be submitted to the relevant school office.
- 12.3 If an absence from the teaching period means a student is **unable to submit** a summative coursework assignment by the agreed deadline, the student should contact the relevant school and request an extension **before** the assignment deadline as well as complete an extenuating circumstances form. Schools may ask for evidence of the reason for the absence in agreeing an extension to a deadline.
- Students who are ill for a period of time during the teaching period, whether close to the deadline or not, must submit work on time unless an extension has been agreed by the School. Schools will not accept late submission without penalty where no extension has been granted.

### *During the Examination Period*

- 12.4 Students who are unable to attend a summative examination/s must inform the school of their non-attendance as soon as possible and prior to the start of the examination. In such cases the student should complete the University's extenuating circumstances form (available from [www.bristol.ac.uk/currentstudents/forms/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/currentstudents/forms/)) and submit it along with any appropriate medical certification to the relevant school office. Students may self-certificate using this form for an absence where they are not capable of taking an examination due to illness (see 27.24)
- 12.5 Students who start but are unable to complete a summative examination due to illness must inform the examination invigilator and attend an appointment with a medical practitioner and obtain a medical note on the same day as the examination. The note and the completed extenuating circumstances form must be submitted to the relevant school office.
- 12.6 For further information on the process for notifying the University of any Extenuating Circumstances during the examination period, see section 27.
- 12.7 Students should also ensure they meet any school or programme requirements concerning notification of absence.
- 12.8 The information provided in the forms will be held by the University and processed by staff in schools and Faculty Offices in order to keep a record of student absence. Schools will monitor the frequency of individual absence and may request that the student provides medical certification in multiple and sustained instances of self-certified illness. Information will be recorded and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- 12.9 The completed form should be submitted by the student to the student's school within TWO working days of the end of the period of absence or, in cases of absence from an examination, prior to the meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners.

## **13. Suspension of Study – for all taught programmes**

- 13.1 Suspension of studies is defined as the formal introduction of a pause in a student's studies during which they are not required to engage with their studies.
- 13.2 On resumption of their studies, students are expected to fulfil the same progression criteria as if they had not suspended their studies.
- 13.3 This policy does not relate to any suspension instigated or mandated by the University due to misconduct, which is covered in the University's Student Disciplinary Rules and Regulations, or due to a mental health difficulty, which is covered by the University's Policy on Fitness to Study.
- 13.4 Students do not have the automatic right to suspend their studies. The University expects students to normally complete their study in a single continuous period. As a suspension of study will interrupt a student's progress on his/her programme, it will only be granted where there are good grounds and supporting documentation (e.g. a report from a registered medical practitioner).

### *Grounds for Suspension*

- 13.5 A suspension may be granted on the grounds that the student is unable to engage effectively with their studies owing to external factors such as serious and persistent health problems, disability, bereavement or additional sole caring responsibilities,

serious financial problems, mandatory military service, or where a part-time student's employment pattern has changed.

- 13.6 A suspension may also be granted if it is demonstrated by the student that it would genuinely be in his or her best academic interests to suspend studies, for example in order to take up employment or other activities that will contribute to their academic development or where the student is transferring to another programme.

*Request for a suspension*

- 13.7 Each request for suspension of study must be considered individually taking into account the particular circumstances of the student.
- 13.8 Suspension must be for a defined period. The length of the period of suspension granted should match, as closely as possible, the time required by the circumstances that necessitate the suspension. The period of suspension will necessarily affect the student's maximum study period by the same duration of time.
- 13.9 A period or periods of suspension should total no more than 12 months throughout a programme of study unless a specific extension to the period of suspension has been agreed (see 13.23).
- 13.10 Suspensions cannot be backdated by more than one month from the date of the request for suspension of studies.
- 13.11 A request for a suspension of study must be made by the student or his or her proxy. The student should notify the School of his or her intention and submit a completed form (generated by the School Office), accompanied by any relevant supporting documents (medical evidence or correspondence as appropriate).

- 13.12 In cases where the accompanying documentation are not comprehensive enough to determine the best course of action for a student, schools may wish to request and consider supporting evidence from medical, counselling or other relevant services before agreeing to recommend a suspension of registration. When doing this, Schools must consider what is reasonable with respect to a student's particular circumstances.

- 13.13 There may be additional rules on suspensions from a funding body. It is the responsibility of the student to confirm that arrangements and approval for the suspension have been secured with any funding sponsor that is involved. Postgraduate students in receipt of a studentship should note that Research Council or UoB studentship funding will cease during a period of suspension.

- 13.14 Any change to student status, such as a suspension of study, will affect immigration status in the UK. The University is required to report any changes in status to the Home Office. The International Office provides guidance and advice to visa-holding students who are seeking a suspension of study. Please see the website for further information: [www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/visas-immigration/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/visas-immigration/)

- 13.15 The completed form will be considered by the relevant faculty education director for approval; any difficulties with the student's progression that the School might foresee should be reported.

- 13.16 The criteria for a return from suspension of studies and any change in the status of the student, through transfer to another programme for example, must be set out and agreed by relevant parties (the student, the school and a representative of the faculty) at the point of suspension and the agreement formally recorded and sent to the student. If circumstances change during the period of suspension then it may be appropriate for the criteria to be revisited, in consultation with the relevant parties.



13.17 The Faculty will write to the student notifying them of the suspension of study and any conditions that need to be fulfilled for return.

#### *Return from suspension*

13.18 The support arrangements, and the associated responsibilities of the student and the school, should be clarified and agreed by the relevant parties prior to the student's return such that he or she is able to engage with and meet the requirements of the programme.

13.19 Faculties may require an accompanying translation where the medical certificate is provided in a language other than English or specify the medical practitioner who should assess the student.

13.20 Schools should make suitable arrangements to accommodate the student if there have been significant changes to the programme during the period of suspension that will enable the student to complete his or her studies.

13.21 If a student is unable to return on the agreed date, she or he may seek further approval to extend their period of suspension (see 13.23).

13.22 A student for whom the agreed period of suspension becomes insufficient should withdraw from the programme and, should they wish, reapply at a later date, requesting that the existing credit points are recognised as prior learning (see section 10).

#### *Extension to a period of suspension*

13.23 An extension of up to 12 months to the period of suspension may be granted in exceptional circumstances.

13.24 Good grounds for an extension to a period of suspension may include: serious and persistent health problems, disability, significant bereavement or additional sole caring responsibilities, serious financial problems, mandatory military service or where a part-time student's employment pattern has changed.

13.25 Requests should be made on the relevant form and be accompanied by any supporting documents, such as medical evidence or correspondence.

13.26 If applicable, the school should forward written support for the extension to the relevant education director to agree.

13.27 Extensions to a period of suspension beyond the 12 months in a programme also require the approval of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students).

## **14. Extension of Study – for taught postgraduate programmes**

14.1 Extensions are used where exceptional circumstances necessitate extension of the normal period of study in order to complete the dissertation or equivalent. An agreed extension may involve the payment of additional fees.

14.2 An extension of study will only be granted where there are good grounds, supporting documentation (e.g. a medical note from a GP) and the request is made in accordance with the dates outlined in 14.4 and 14.5. There will need to be clear evidence of satisfactory progress for an extension request to be granted.

14.3 Good grounds for an extension of study may include: serious and persistent health problems, significant bereavement or additional sole caring responsibilities, serious financial problems, mandatory military service or where a part-time student's employment pattern has changed.

- 14.4 One or more extensions of study totalling not more than 12 months may be requested by a student and authorised by the graduate Education Director. The request should be made at least two weeks prior to the end of the period of study.
- 14.5 An extension of study for any period that takes the accumulative total over 12 months will also require the approval of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students). The request should be made at least four weeks prior to the end date of the original period of extension.
- 14.6 Requests should be made on the relevant form and be accompanied by any supporting documentation, such as medical evidence or correspondence. Requests should be sent initially to the Programme Director.
- 14.7 The Programme Director should forward written support for the extension to the relevant education director, and certify that the student has made satisfactory progress so far. There may be additional rules on extensions from a funding body. It is the responsibility of the student to confirm that arrangements and approval for the extension have been secured with any funding body that is involved.
- 14.8 Any change to student status, such as an extension of study, will affect immigration status in the UK. The University is required to report any changes in status to the Home Office. The International Office provides guidance and advice to visa-holding students who are seeking an extension of study. Please see the website for further information: [www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/visas-immigration/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international-office/visas-immigration/)

## 15. Supplementary Year

- 15.1 The Supplementary Year is an additional year of study within a programme that is provided for eligible students to enable them to meet the criteria for progression whereas otherwise they are not able to progress to the next year or component.
- 15.2 A Faculty Board of Examiners may permit a student to undertake the Supplementary Year if a student does not have sufficient credit points to allow him or her to progress, because of:
- Academic failure: if a student fails a unit and the subsequent re-sit (of up to 20 credit points in an undergraduate modular programme and 30 credit points in a taught postgraduate modular programme), he or she may be permitted a final opportunity for re-assessment. A student is only permitted to take a supplementary year for this reason once during their programme of study.
  - Extenuating circumstances: if a student's ability to fulfil the criteria for the award of credit points has been affected by medical or other circumstances, he or she may be permitted to re-attempt the relevant units without penalty.
- 15.3 The Supplementary Year is available to both undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, but not on the non-modular professional programmes.
- 15.4 In cases of (a): students who are placed on a supplementary year are required to undertake the units they have failed and any additional units appropriate to the programme of study, as determined by the faculty. Marks for units that contribute to the final programme mark for will be capped at the minimum pass mark.
- 15.5 In cases of (b): students who are placed on a supplementary year due to extenuating circumstances will undertake the affected units as determined by the Faculty Board of Examiners. Marks will be awarded as normal (i.e. not capped if first attempt).
- 15.6 It is the faculty's discretion to determine whether the student is required to engage with the content of the whole unit or a particular component of the unit.

## D. FORMS AND CONDUCT OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment is defined as “a process that measures students’ learning, skills and understanding”.

Assessment serves several purposes:

- It is the means whereby student achievement is measured and compared, thereby providing the basis for decisions on whether a student is ready to progress or qualify for an award or to receive a licence to practise;
- enabling students to obtain feedback on the quality of their learning, thereby helping them improve their performance;
- giving staff an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and consistency of practice.

### 16. Forms of Assessment

16.1 The assessment methods that might be expected in taught programmes are provided at [www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/annex/annex-formsofassessment.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/annex/annex-formsofassessment.html).

Programmes should be designed such that students are given an opportunity to develop aptitudes for, and be assessed on, learning outcomes that have been defined for the programme they are undertaking. Assessment should reflect a balance of formative and summative requirements such that students are guided in their learning as well as being given information on ways in which they can improve their attainment. There must also be clear development of, and information about, progression through the programme of study, in terms of both attainment and demonstration of skills and attributes.

16.2 A programme need not employ all of the forms of assessment but the range should be sufficient to enable the full spectrum of knowledge and skills (both subject specific and generic) embodied in the programme and unit intended learning outcomes, to be appropriately assessed individually or cumulatively.

16.3 When assessing student work, the following principles should be applied wherever possible:

- a) Different forms of assessment should be used to test different types of skills.
- b) A variety of forms of summative assessment should be utilised, as appropriate, within a programme preceded by the provision of a formative experience of the summative assessment.
- c) The volume of summative assessment in a programme must be the least necessary to measure the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning outcomes.
- d) The overall assessment load associated with any unit must be appropriate to the level of study, the credit point weighting, and the need for formative feedback. This must be specified and agreed when the unit is first approved and should be reviewed as part of annual programme review.
- e) Programme Directors should agree appropriate assessment methods to assist unit directors in choosing a set of formative and summative assessment tasks which are proportionate and consistent within the subject.
- f) In assessing a unit composed of more than one component, it is the unit as a whole, not each component that needs to be satisfactorily completed. Components need not be capable of being separately assessed, although

programmes may require a component to be satisfactorily completed in order for a unit to be passed and enable the credit points to be awarded.

- g) Students should be given outline information about the assessment tasks they will encounter at the outset of the programme and the implications of any failure. Detailed information should be given at the beginning of each subsequent academic year on the timing and weighting of each assessment. Such information should be made available in programme/unit handbooks, and online via Blackboard, and should be reinforced, both at the beginning of a unit and before each assessment task.
- h) Decisions about the utilisation of the different types of assessment tasks should take into account competency standards, developing graduate attributes, professional frameworks, subject benchmarks and the degree to which the task can provide formative feedback and encourage student self-reflection.

16.4 All assessment should be undertaken in the language in which the material from the unit is taught, unless there is a clear academic rationale for doing otherwise. Where this is the case, the rationale must be approved as part of the normal programme and unit approval process and students informed prior to or on the commencement of their studies. Students may not request assessment to be conducted in an alternative language other than as allowed by this clause.

### ***Assuring assessment criteria and intended learning outcomes at unit level***

16.5 Faculties are responsible for ensuring that students are given clear guidance on the assessment requirements of their programmes and receive equitable treatment university-wide, whilst Schools are responsible for this at the unit level.

16.6 Unit specifications must provide sufficient information about the assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes. This should be accomplished by reference to the university common generic marking criteria and marking scales (see section 20) as well as the subject-specific marking criteria.

16.7 Any significant changes to a unit, at whatever level it is approved, should automatically trigger a review of whether the assessment methods and criteria remain congruent with the unit's intended learning outcomes.

16.8 Annual review mechanisms for units (annual unit or programme reviews) must provide appropriate opportunities for evaluating whether the assessments test the stated unit objectives/learning outcomes.

### ***Academic scrutiny of assessment***

16.9 The Head of School<sup>1</sup> is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place to assure the quality and standards of assessment. This responsibility is normally delegated to one or more School Examinations Officer (see section 25).

16.10 All assessment tasks and marking schemes should normally be subject to review by a second person, except in cases where the assessment accounts for the equivalent of 25 percent or less of the overall mark in a 20 credit point unit (e.g. 50 percent in a 10 credit point unit).

16.11 External examiners should be asked to scrutinise all examination papers and any summative assessment tasks that accounts to the equivalent of more than 25 percent of the overall mark in a 20 credit point unit and contributes to the final degree result. To facilitate this, external examiners should have access to the

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<sup>1</sup> For the MBChB programme, this would be the Dean of the Faculty.

relevant information relating to aims and objectives, contents, intended learning outcomes, assessment methods, marking criteria and any model answers.

## 17. Conduct of Assessments

### **Formal unseen written examinations**

- 17.1 The procedures under which the University requires unseen written examinations to be conducted are set out in the University's Examination Regulations (annex 5). Should any divergence from these procedures be requested, the chair of the relevant School Board of Examiners must be consulted. She or he may act on behalf of the board, but must first consult the undergraduate or graduate Education Director.
- 17.2 The University's Examination Regulations contain detailed provisions concerning the handling of allegations of plagiarism, cheating and other examinations offences (sections 2.9 -11.18). Anyone with responsibility for handling such allegations must be fully familiar with these regulations.

### *The examination periods*

- 17.3 Summative examinations must be set within the January and May/June assessment periods. Re-sit examinations may only be set in the August/September period. Exceptions must be agreed as in 17.5.
- 17.4 The summative assessment of units must take place during or at the end of the teaching block in which the unit is run, except for agreed exceptions.
- 17.5 Where there is good academic reason to request an exemption from 17.3 or 17.4, the programme director must make a case to the relevant Faculty Education Director. If the Faculty Education Director approves the case, it must then be presented to the relevant Academic Director of Studies for final approval.
- 17.6 Examinations within the MBChB, BDS, BVSc and other specified non-modular programmes should be arranged as outlined in 17.3 and 17.4 as far as is possible.

### *Students requesting to take summative examinations outside of the United Kingdom*

#### Students registered for an award of the University of Bristol

- 17.7 All University of Bristol students taking first-sit or re-sit examinations are expected to take their scheduled examinations in venues arranged by the University of Bristol. In exceptional cases, however, approval may be sought for permission to take an examination at an approved institution outside the United Kingdom (UK).
- 17.8 There is no automatic entitlement to sit an examination outside the UK. Permission to do so will only be given if:
- (i) It is permitted by programme and/or faculty requirements (e.g. 17.9);
  - (ii) The student has provided sufficient cause or reason\* to not sit the examination at the University of Bristol;
  - (iii) The arrangements for examination at the approved institution conform to University regulations;
  - (iv) There is not suitable alternative.

This judgement is at the discretion of the home Faculty of the student.

\* Holiday or working commitments at the time of the examination will not be considered a sufficient cause or reason for taking the examination outside the UK. Authorisation to sit an examination outside the UK on medical grounds will not

normally be granted as students should only be taking examinations when fit to do so. Students who have medical issues should seek advice from their School.

- 17.9 Students on the MBChB, BDS and BVSc programmes are prohibited from taking examinations outside the UK, due to a requirement from professional accrediting bodies.
- 17.10 Any examination scheduled outside the UK must take place in an institution where the conditions for examination have been formally agreed by the University. The relevant Faculty will notify the University's Examinations Office in such instances, which will liaise with the student's home institution with regard to the arrangements for the examination such that it is convened in accordance with the regulations of the University of Bristol.
- 17.11 Any examination arranged outside of the UK must be scheduled to run concurrently or to overlap with same examination at the University of Bristol.
- 17.12 The same procedures apply where the requirements of a distance learning programme necessitate students taking their written summative examinations outside the UK. Consideration should be given during the design stage of distance learning programmes as to whether alternative forms of assessment are more appropriate.

#### Students whose award is not made by the University of Bristol

- 17.13 A student studying at the University of Bristol, but whose award is not being made by the University (i.e. on a 'Study Abroad' period), will be permitted the opportunity to undertake a summative examination at their home institution, where the student is required to re-engage with his or her studies at the home institution at the same time that examinations are scheduled at Bristol (i.e. in the January examination period). This allowance is subject to:
- (i) It being permitted by programme requirements;
  - (ii) The arrangements for examination conforming to University regulation, including that it is held concurrently with the examination held in Bristol or, where this is not possible, on the same day.

This judgement is at the discretion of the home Faculty of the student.

- 17.14 In such cases, at the behest of the student, the International Office will inform the relevant School and Faculty in which the Study Abroad student is based at the start of each academic year.
- 17.15 The relevant Faculty will subsequently notify the University's Examinations Office, which will liaise with the student's home institution with regard to the arrangements for the examination such that it is convened in accordance with the regulations of the University of Bristol.

#### ***Coursework and similar forms of written summative assessment***

Coursework is defined as any summative assessment based on essays, assignments, creative writing or other tasks that is completed outside timetabled classes in the students' own time.

- 17.16 Students should be provided with timetables at the start of each unit indicating when coursework will be set, when it is to be submitted and when it will be returned. Deadlines for coursework should be provided in sufficient time for completion.

- 17.17 Clear statements about how a student should apply for an extension to the original deadline and the penalties for late submission must also be provided (see section 24).
- 17.18 Academic misconduct associated with continuously assessed assignments should be dealt with as a disciplinary offence.
- 17.19 Formative feedback on summative coursework should be provided to students. The work and the feedback should be returned promptly, in sufficient time to help the student's work on subsequent assignments. Student-led forms of feedback should also be undertaken prior to any subsequent assignments (see section 19).
- 17.20 External examiner(s) should be supplied with the summative assessment structure for a programme in which the examination and coursework requirements are defined. External examiner(s) must be able to scrutinise examination papers and examples of summative coursework.
- 17.21 The director of a unit that utilises coursework as an assessment method is responsible for ensuring that all those involved in the assessment process are aware of the guidelines for the assessment of the unit, and for uniformity of marking where the marking of coursework is undertaken by more than one person., procedures must be in place to ensure the uniformity of marking.

#### *e-Submission of coursework*

Procedural guidance on the e-submission of coursework is available from:

[www.bris.ac.uk/tel/support/tools/e-submission/](http://www.bris.ac.uk/tel/support/tools/e-submission/).

- 17.22 Where employed, the e-submission of work should be consistently applied for all of the students undertaking the assessment and, ideally, to all the appropriate assessments within the unit.
- 17.23 It should be made clear to students if any assessment can or must be submitted online and if the work is to be checked using text, code or other matching software.
- 17.24 Students should be given the opportunity to practise submitting work online before the real event.
- 17.25 Students should be made aware of the submission process, including that:
- i. Submitted files must be in the specified file format(s) (e.g. Word, pdf).
  - ii. Submitted files must comply with instructions, including required file naming and coversheet information (if used).
  - iii. The deadline relates to the complete and successful submission of the coursework and students must ensure that they begin the submission process in good time before the deadline.
  - iv. Checking the successful submission of the work is the responsibility of the student. Staff should only be contacted if the student has identified or experienced a problem (e.g. submitted the wrong file).
- 17.26 In the event that University systems are not accessible on the deadline date/time, the submission deadline should be extended, and students informed. Students should not use alternative methods to submit work e.g. email.
- 17.27 If a student encounters a problem preventing them from submitting their work that is not caused by a University system failure, he or she must notify their School immediately. Evidence of this technical failure may be required by the School. The act of notification in itself does not annul or extend any deadline.

### **Online assessment**

- 17.28 Arrangements should be made for responding to unexpected technical problems in a way that is fair and efficient and within a reasonable timeframe. This includes technical support in case of server failure. In cases of serious technical failure, students should be offered the examination in paper format.
- 17.29 Suitable arrangements should be made in conjunction with the University's central Information Services for the invigilation of online assessment.
- 17.30 The summative examination should only be accessible by secure password and the performance recorded by university-approved secure management tools suited for the purpose.
- 17.31 Computers used for summative examinations should wherever possible have both internet and communication tools disabled, except as needed for the purpose of the assessment.
- 17.32 The use of a large pool or sub-pools of examination questions from which a randomised sub-set of questions is generated to produce individualised student exams is strongly encouraged as long as the pool/s cover/s all aspects of the examinable material and the sub-sample generated is representative. Pools of questions should be carefully constructed to test the unit's intended learning outcomes.
- 17.33 Information Services is responsible for the technical infrastructure which enables the assessment to occur.
- 17.34 Schools must ensure that the scheduling of online assessment does not conflict with the central examinations timetable.
- 17.35 Online assessment must be conducted under the same processes specified by the Code as for other forms of assessment.

### **Oral examinations of individual students**

- 17.36 Two examiners should be present during all oral examinations. If this is not possible then a procedure for recording the event must be in place e.g. video, Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).
- 17.37 Oral examinations should only be used when it matches the intended learning outcome being tested e.g. practical or performance skills. Normally this would not include assessment of simple factual knowledge recall.
- 17.38 It is the responsibility of the Programme Director in conjunction with the Unit Directors involved to demonstrate that the oral examination is reliable, fair and appropriate and adds value to the assessment portfolio.
- 17.39 The external examiner must have adequate access to all intended learning outcomes, including those attached to the oral examination, to be able to form a judgement as to the fairness and appropriateness of the assessment and student performance.
- 17.40 In all cases where oral examinations contribute to the summative assessment of taught programmes, students and examiners must always be aware of the purposes of the assessment and all the possible implications of the outcome.
- 17.41 If an oral examination is part of the assessment of a unit, it must apply to every student taking that unit.
- 17.42 An oral examination is not permitted as a means of moderating a student's examination result or degree classification.



## 18. Assessment and Student Circumstances

### Disability

- *Guidance for schools working with disabled students, including implementing a Disability Support Summary (DSS), is available at: [www.bris.ac.uk/disability-services/documents/dssguide.pdf](http://www.bris.ac.uk/disability-services/documents/dssguide.pdf).*
- *Guidance for boards of examiners with respect to disability and extenuating circumstances is provided in section 27.*
- *Annex 7 “Guidance on reasonable adjustments to the assessment of disabled students” contains further, detailed information on legal requirements and guidance and examples of good practice with regard to disabled students, reasonable adjustments, and competence standards.*
- *The University’s policy on Fitness to Study is available at: [www.bristol.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/act/protected/disability/fitnesstostudy/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/act/protected/disability/fitnesstostudy/).*

- 18.1 Disability is a protected characteristic that is protected under the Equality Act 2010. Schools should have procedures in place that anticipate the support needs of students with a disability (e.g. a school disability coordinator who will liaise as required if a disability is disclosed).
- 18.2 A competence standard is defined within the Equality Act 2010 as: ‘the academic, medical or other standard(s) applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability’. It therefore may not be possible to make reasonable adjustments to aspects of some assessments because they constitute a competence standard.
- 18.3 Schools and Faculties must ensure that competence standards are ‘genuine’, as defined in annex 7. Competence standards should be the subject of regular review to ensure they remain genuine.
- 18.4 Where the competence standard can be shown to be genuine, the duty to make reasonable adjustments does not apply; however, where competence standards cannot be demonstrated as genuine, the duty to make reasonable adjustments remains.
- 18.5 Where competence standards do not apply, Schools must be prepared to implement reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning such that students with disabilities are not disadvantaged.
- 18.6 Schools should ensure that students are given the opportunity to disclose a disability throughout their programme of study and that students are aware that making a decision not to disclose a disability may adversely impact on the school’s ability to make any reasonable adjustments.
- 18.7 Any student who discloses a disability such that additional support may be required, should be signposted to Disability Services. A disabled student is not obliged to make contact with or use Disability Services; in these cases, schools still have a responsibility to make anticipatory and reasonable adjustments.
- 18.8 When a student does contact Disability Services, and there is evidence of a disability, Disability Services will draft a ‘Disability Support Summary’ (DSS). The DSS is devised in consultation with the student. Where the support required is complex, new or unusual, the student’s Faculty/ School will also be consulted. The DSS will state what support the student requires, including adjustments to assessment where appropriate.

- 18.9 For students with a DSS, the 'Examinations, timed assessment and in class tests' section acts in lieu of an Alternative Examination Arrangements (AEA) form and they are not required to submit an AEA form in addition to having a DSS.
- 18.10 Where a student requires an adjustment to his or her assessment and either does not have a DSS or it is not specified in the DSS, they should either: (i) complete and submit an Alternative Examination Arrangements (AEA) form at the earliest opportunity and before the stipulated deadlines; or (ii) contact Disability Services such that a DSS can be created or amended. Students must be made aware that if their application for AEA's (either, the AEA form and supporting evidence or the DSS) is not submitted before the deadline, this may affect the School's decision in terms of what it considers reasonable and practicable to arrange within the time available.
- 18.11 AEA's must be approved by the relevant Faculty Education Director (or nominee). Faculties should keep records of granted AEA's.
- 18.12 Where a disability is not disclosed prior to the assessment, examiners are not obliged to retrospectively consider the effect of a disability on a student's performance.
- 18.13 Programme and unit directors are encouraged to consider the accessibility of assessments on an on-going basis.

### ***Discrimination by association***

- 18.14 It is direct discrimination if an education provider treats a student less favourably because of the student's association with another person, who has a **protected characteristic**<sup>2</sup>. However, this does not apply to pregnancy or maternity. Discrimination by association may occur in various ways, e.g. where the student has the relationship of parent, child, partner, carer or friend of someone with a protected characteristic.
- 18.15 Schools should consider making adjustments for students because of their association with someone who has the protected characteristic of disability. In relation to assessment, this could mean that a student will request an alternative assessment date due to their role as a carer of a disabled dependent. Consideration to adjustment of an assessment (e.g. timing) would have to be given if the request is due to the student's association with a disabled person.

### ***Religious observances***

- 18.16 Where it is practicable, reasonable and fair to all students, assessment tasks should be designed to accommodate the religious observances of the students and staff involved. *The Examinations Office* and schools should work together, with advice from the *Multi-faith Chaplaincy* when necessary, to try to ensure, as far as it is practicable so to do, that the examination timetable does not conflict with the observance of religious festivals and other holy days.
- 18.17 Schools should make clear to prospective applicants and current students, at the outset of their studies, that it is their personal responsibility to inform the faculty office about their religious beliefs where there is potential for conflict with the setting of assessment. Students should be reminded of their obligations through an appropriate entry in school / programme handbooks.

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<sup>2</sup> The protected characteristics for higher education are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. More information on the protected characteristics can be accessed at: <https://www.bris.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/secure/act/>.

18.18 Some programmes include mandatory requirements, often but not exclusively, related to the need to demonstrate certain knowledge, skills and competencies required by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies. These may require students to undertake study and assessments on days associated with religious observance.

### ***Pregnancy/maternity or paternity***

18.19 If it is likely that a student's pregnancy might affect her ability to meet coursework deadlines or sit examinations, consideration must be given to implementing measures to support her in meeting the requirements of the programme.

18.20 If a student is due to give birth near to, or during assessment deadlines, or the examination period, but she wishes to complete her assessed work or sit her examinations, she should not be prevented from so doing.

18.21 Schools should ensure that the needs of pregnant students are addressed during assessments, including offering the opportunity to sit the examination in a location separate from other students.

18.22 If a pregnant student is concerned about sitting examinations or meeting assessed work deadlines, or if she has a pregnancy-related health condition that is exacerbated by stress, she should be advised to seek medical advice. If her midwife or doctor advises against her sitting an examination or trying to meet the assessed work deadline, an alternative method of assessment should be explored.

18.23 If a pregnant student is unable to undertake an alternative method of assessment, or if she experiences significant pregnancy-related problems in the course of an examination or while undertaking assessed work, the school should make arrangements for her to sit the examination, as a first attempt, at the earliest possible opportunity or agree to an extension to the deadline for the submission of coursework.

18.24 If a student is likely to be absent due to their partner giving birth, and where the due date conflicts with any scheduled assessments, staff should endeavour to offer flexibility wherever practicable so to do. However, in such circumstances automatic dispensation from examinations will not always be possible. This provision also extends to cover same sex couples.

18.25 Further guidance for staff on student pregnancy, maternity and paternity is available from: <https://www.bris.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/act/protected/pregandmat/>.

## **19. Feedback to Students**

19.1 Each school must develop and publicise to its students a clear policy on the delivery of feedback on formative and summative work, covering the following points:

- the different ways in which students will receive guidance on their work;
- which assessment tasks students will receive feedback on, and in what form;
- the delivery of feedback on different forms of assessment and how students will be informed if it proves impossible to meet the agreed deadline (formative feedback on work should normally be delivered within three working weeks of the deadline for submission);
- the opportunities students will have to discuss their work and their progress with staff, as well as guidance on how they should make use of feedback.

19.2 The principles for the provision of formative feedback to students are available at: [www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/annex/annex-deliveringformativefeedback.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/annex/annex-deliveringformativefeedback.html).

## E. MARKING OF ASSESSMENTS AND THE PROCESSING OF MARKS

### 20. Marking Criteria and Scales

- 20.1 Marking criteria are designed to help students know what is expected of them. Marking criteria differ from model answers and more prescriptive marking schemes which assign a fixed proportion of the assessment mark to particular knowledge, understanding and/or skills. Annex 1 provides definitions for: marking criteria, marking scheme and model answer.
- 20.2 Where there is more than one marker for a particular assessment task, schools should take steps to ensure consistency of marking. Programme specific assessment criteria must be precise enough to ensure consistency of marking across candidates and markers, compatible with a proper exercise of academic judgement on the part of individual markers.
- 20.3 The relevant marking criteria should be made available to staff and students before the assessment.
- 20.4 Markers are encouraged to use pro forma in order to show how they have arrived at their decision. Comments provided on pro forma should help candidates, internal markers and moderators and external examiners to understand why a particular mark has been awarded. Schools should agree, in advance of the assessment, whether internal moderators have access to the pro forma / mark sheets completed by the first marker before or after they mark a candidate's work.

#### ***University generic marking criteria***

- 20.5 The common University generic marking criteria, set out in table 1, represent levels of attainment on a graded scale, of levels 4-7 of study. Establishing and applying criteria for assessment at level 8 should be managed by the school that owns the associated programme, in liaison with the faculty and the Academic Director of Graduate Studies.
- 20.6 The common marking criteria are designed to be used for an individual piece of assessed student work. The descriptors give broad comparability of standards by level of study across all programmes as well as level of performance across the University. They reflect the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications but need to be benchmarked against subject specific criteria at the programme level.
- 20.7 Faculties, with their constituent schools, must establish appropriately specific and detailed marking criteria which are congruent with the University-level criteria and, if appropriate, the level of study. All forms of programme-specific marking criteria must be approved by the Faculty.

#### ***Marking scales***

- 20.8 Assessment must be marked using one of the sanctioned marking scales, as follows:
- 0-100 marking scale
  - 0-20 marking scale

A five point A-E marking scale is available for those programmes which already utilise this scale where distinct grades of competence are being measured. Given the complexities in translating a grade in this type of scale to a percentage for the purposes of progression or classification, any new proposals to use the A-E scale requires a pedagogic rationale for doing so and the approval of the relevant Faculty Education Director and Academic Director of Studies.

20.9 Schools should determine the marking scale that is best suited to the form of assessment that is being employed and ensure that the scale that is being utilised to mark the assessment is available and signposted to students in advance.

**Exceptions to the sanctioned marking scales**

20.10 Neither the 0-20 nor 0-100 point scale is applicable to assessments where marks are not awarded; the student either passes or not. Such assessment may be employed, subject to approval by the faculty, when a student is required to demonstrate a minimum standard of competence for reasons related to professional accreditation requirements.

20.11 Highly structured assessments that are scored out of a total number less than 100 may be utilised where each mark can be justified in relation to those marks neighbouring it. In these cases the mark must be translated onto the 0-100 point scale, mapped against the relevant marking criteria, and students informed of the use of this method in advance of the assessment.

**Reaching the ‘Unit Mark’ (see also section 22)**

20.12 Marks gauged on the 0-20 scale should be translated to a point on the 0-100 scale so to calculate the overall unit mark for the purposes of progression and classification (see table 2).

20.13 The 0-20 point scale is a non-linear ordinal scale; for example, a mark on the 0-20 point scale IS NOT equivalent to a percentage arrived at by multiplying the mark by 5. Table 2 provides an equivalence relationship between the scales to enable the aggregation of marks from different assessment events to provide the overall unit mark which will be a percentage. This is illustrated below for a notional unit.

In this example the MCQ uses all points on the 0-100 scale whereas all the other assessments use the 0-20 point scale.

To achieve the final unit mark each component mark needs to be adjusted as shown below:

	<b>Dissertation (25%)</b>	<b>Unseen written exam (35%)</b>	<b>MCQ (25%)</b>	<b>Oral exam (15%)</b>	<b>Total unit mark out of 100</b>
<b>Actual score</b>	12 on 0-20 scale	8 on 0-20 scale	57 on 0-100 scale	15 on 0-20 scale	
<b>Adjusted to 0-100 scale</b>	62/100	48/100	57/100	72/100	
<b>Final weighted mark</b>	62 x 25 = 1550	48 x 35 = 1680	57 x 25 = 1425	72 x 15 = 1080	<b>5735/100 = 57.35 (57)</b>

20.14 The overall unit mark must be expressed as a percentage as the University’s degree classification methodology is based on the percentage scale.

20.15 The final programme mark for a taught programme will be calculated by applying the agreed algorithm for the programme to the unit marks (see sections 33 and 34).

**TABLE 1: Generic Marking Criteria mapped against the three marking scales**

Grade	0-20 point scale	0-100 point scale	Criteria to be satisfied
A	20 19 18	100 94 89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work would be worthy of dissemination under appropriate conditions.</li> <li>➤ Mastery of advanced methods and techniques at a level beyond that explicitly taught.</li> <li>➤ Ability to synthesise and employ in an original way ideas from across the subject.</li> <li>➤ In group work, there is evidence of an outstanding individual contribution.</li> <li>➤ Excellent presentation.</li> <li>➤ Outstanding command of critical analysis and judgement.</li> </ul>
	17 16 15	83 78 72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Excellent range and depth of attainment of intended learning outcomes.</li> <li>➤ Mastery of a wide range of methods and techniques.</li> <li>➤ Evidence of study and originality clearly beyond the bounds of what has been taught.</li> <li>➤ In group work, there is evidence of an excellent individual contribution.</li> <li>➤ Excellent presentation.</li> <li>➤ Able to display a command of critical analysis and judgement.</li> </ul>
B	14 13 12	68 65 62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Attained all the intended learning outcomes for a unit.</li> <li>➤ Able to use well a range of methods and techniques to come to conclusions.</li> <li>➤ Evidence of study, comprehension, and synthesis beyond the bounds of what has been explicitly taught.</li> <li>➤ Very good presentation of material.</li> <li>➤ Able to employ critical analysis and judgement.</li> <li>➤ Where group work is involved there is evidence of a productive individual contribution.</li> </ul>
C	11 10 9	58 55 52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Some limitations in attainment of learning objectives, but has managed to grasp most of them.</li> <li>➤ Able to use most of the methods and techniques taught.</li> <li>➤ Evidence of study and comprehension of what has been taught</li> <li>➤ Adequate presentation of material.</li> <li>➤ Some grasp of issues and concepts underlying the techniques and material taught.</li> <li>➤ Where group work is involved there is evidence of a positive individual contribution.</li> </ul>
D	8 7	48 45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited attainment of intended learning outcomes.</li> <li>➤ Able to use a proportion of the basic methods and techniques taught.</li> <li>➤ Evidence of study and comprehension of what has been taught, but grasp insecure.</li> <li>➤ Poorly presented.</li> <li>➤ Some grasp of the issues and concepts underlying the techniques and material taught, but weak and incomplete.</li> </ul>
E	6	42	
	5	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Attainment of only a minority of the learning outcomes.</li> <li>➤ Able to demonstrate a clear but limited use of some of the basic methods and techniques taught.</li> <li>➤ Weak and incomplete grasp of what has been taught.</li> <li>➤ Deficient understanding of the issues and concepts underlying the techniques and material taught.</li> </ul>
0	1 - 4	7 - 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Attainment of nearly all the intended learning outcomes deficient.</li> <li>➤ Lack of ability to use at all or the right methods and techniques taught.</li> <li>➤ Inadequately and incoherently presented.</li> <li>➤ Wholly deficient grasp of what has been taught.</li> <li>➤ Lack of understanding of the issues and concepts underlying the techniques and material taught.</li> </ul>
	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No significant assessable material, absent, or assessment missing a "must pass" component.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 2: Relationship between the three marking scales**

<b>0-20 point scale</b>	<b>A-E scale</b>	<b>Equivalent to these fixed points on the 0-100 point scale</b>
20	A	100
19	A	94
18	A	89
17	A	83
16	A	78
15	A	72
14	B	68
13	B	65
12	B	62
11	C	58
10	C	55
9	C	52
8	D	48
7	D	45
6	E	42
5	E	35
1 to 4	E	7 to 29
0	0	0

## 21. Treatment of Marks

- 21.1 The University assures the quality of its marking through moderation. Definitions of the terms used in this section can be found in the glossary of terms at annex 1.
- 21.2 All work assessed for summative purposes should be capable of being independently moderated and made available in case it needs to be moderated by the external examiner(s).
- 21.3 Where coursework is assessed summatively, schools should have a system in place to ensure students' work is available for moderation at a later date, by a means that ensures that the marked work is identical to that originally submitted.
- 21.4 Students should be informed at the outset of their programme of studies and at the beginning of each academic year of any obligation to make available assessed work which might be required for the purpose of moderation.
- 21.5 Each faculty, through its Faculty Quality Enhancement Team, should ensure that its schools have clear marking and verification procedures, as well as information on the operation of moderation, so that students are treated fairly and consistently across the University. Such information, along with details on the University's procedure for handling the final programme mark within the borderline of classifications (see section 33), should be available to students (e.g. in the student handbook).

- 21.6 If a school is prepared to offer a candidate, who has produced an illegible script, the opportunity to dictate or transcribe it, in accordance with the Examination Regulations (2.8) at annex 5, the following procedure must be followed:

*A school may invite a candidate to transcribe or dictate an illegible script. Any transcription or dictation must be verbatim, and the student should be asked to sign the transcript to confirm that it is a true copy of the original script. The transcription or dictation will be treated as part of the formal examination process. Schools may also invite the student to undertake an oral examination.*

- 21.7 The less prescriptive the assessment (i.e. the lower the expectation of conformity to a model answer), the more necessary it is to ensure an effective moderation strategy. The types of moderation and how they may or may not be applied for assessments within the University of Bristol are outlined in 21.8-21.16.

- 21.8 Scaling is not normally permitted, except in the following two circumstances:

- a) Where the raw scores for the whole cohort are converted onto an appropriately distributed marking scale as part of the planned design of the assessment. The rationale and mechanism for scaling should be recorded in the unit specification and in the minutes of the relevant board of examiners.
- b) Where the marks of a cohort of students are moderated *post hoc* due to an unintended distribution of marks. When an assessment or a question within an assessment has not performed as intended, scaling may be employed (in this instance the methodology will not have been planned beforehand). This should be an exceptional event. The rationale and mechanism for scaling should be recorded in the minutes of the school and faculty boards of examiners.

- 21.9 Before scaling is used, its use and the method that is intended to be employed must be agreed with the relevant Chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners, prior to application, and then approved by the relevant external examiners and the school and faculty boards of examiners.

- 21.10 The use of scaling must also be made transparent to students: in the case of (a), students must be informed of the way in which the raw scores are converted onto



the marking scale prior to the assessment; whilst in the case of (b) students should be informed of the process after the assessment when it makes a significant impact. Schools are responsible for making the method and rationale available to students.

21.11 **Norm-Referencing** (as defined in annex 1) is not permitted as a means of assessment in the University of Bristol. Criterion-referenced assessment (e.g. marking schemes, marking criteria) is to be used for all assessments.

21.12 **Negative Marking** may be employed in subjects where it is essential that the student should not guess the right answer. If negative marking is employed, this must be with the full knowledge of the student. There must be appropriate rubric, explaining that the assessment will be subject to negative marking on the cover of an examination paper, and the students should be given opportunities to practise such assessments before undertaking a summative assessment marked in this way.

21.13 Schools may choose to adopt double-marking as academically desirable in the case of summative assessment (see annex 1 for a definition of double marking).

21.14 Detailed marking criteria for assessed group work, the assessment of class presentations, and self/peer (student) assessment must be established and made available to students and examiners.

21.15 In respect of group work, it is often desirable to award both a group and individual mark, to ensure individuals' contributions to the task are acknowledged. The weighting of the group and individual mark and how the marks are combined should be made clear to the students.

21.16 It is recognised that there are particular difficulties in providing the second marking/moderation in some forms of assessment such as a class presentation which contribute to the overall unit mark. In these cases evidence of how the assessment mark was reached should be preserved for moderation.

## 22. Processing and Recording Marks

### ***The unit mark***

*See also annex 13.*

22.1 The mark for each individual unit is calculated as the weighted average of the marks for each of its constituent assessments.

22.2 For the purposes of awarding credit for an individual unit, the mark for each unit is rounded to the nearest integer.

22.3 For the purposes of determining progression from year to year or from the taught component to the dissertation stage, the actual unit mark is used to calculate the average year mark or taught component mark (see sections 30-32).

22.4 For the purposes of determining the final programme mark and degree classification in taught modular programmes, the actual unit mark is used to calculate the final programme mark (see sections 33 and 34).

22.5 Programmes may weight the different assessments within a unit and may permit compensation across assessments within a unit, as prescribed within the appropriate unit specifications, unless the assessment has been designated as 'must-pass'.

22.6 The final unit mark should be displayed as the calculated rounded integer, unless required by a board of examiners for the purposes of calculating the year mark/taught

component mark (so to determine progression) or the final programme mark (so to determine degree classification).

22.7 Students should receive the scores for each assessment, as well as their overall rounded unit mark.

### ***The year mark in undergraduate programmes***

22.8 For the purposes of determining progression, specifically for the application of 30.12, the overall mark achieved for the year in undergraduate programmes is calculated by averaging the weighted unit marks and rounding the result to the nearest integer.

22.9 Units that are pass/fail do not contribute towards the calculation of the year mark, but must be passed for the purposes of progression / completion.

22.10 The weighting given to the unit mark will correspond to the credit point value of the unit, e.g. the mark for a 20 credit point unit would be a 1/6 of the whole year mark, if the student has to achieve 120 credit points during the year.

See annex 13 for an example of this calculation.

### ***The taught component mark - in taught postgraduate programmes***

22.11 For the purposes of determining progression from the taught component to the dissertation stage, specifically the application of 31.12 and classification the overall mark achieved for the taught component is calculated by averaging the weighted unit marks and rounding the result to the nearest integer.

22.12 Units that are pass/fail will not contribute towards the calculation of the taught component mark, but must be passed for the purposes of progression / completion.

22.13 The weighting given to the unit mark will correspond to the credit point value of the unit, e.g. the mark for a 20 credit point unit would be 1/6 of the whole year mark, if the student has to achieve 120 credit points during the year.

See annex 13 for an example of this calculation.

22.14 Progression to the dissertation stage is normally only permitted on the satisfactory completion of the taught component. There is no compensation between the taught component and the dissertation (i.e. a mark in the taught component cannot compensate for a lower mark in the dissertation, and vice versa). The dissertation may be suspended at the discretion of the relevant Board of Examiners if the result from the taught component is unsatisfactory.

## **23. Anonymity**

23.1 Summative assessments should be marked anonymously unless it is not practicable (e.g. for an oral examination, or in a small cohort), or there is a clear academic benefit that outweighs those of full anonymity, such as providing personalised feedback to students.

23.2 When full anonymity in marking is not possible or judged to be of less benefit in comparison to the provision of personalised feedback to students, then schools and unit directors are responsible for ensuring that marks are awarded in a fair and equitable manner through the use of specific moderation techniques, by a partial level of anonymity combined with specific moderation techniques, and/or review by an external examiner.

23.3 Anonymity must be preserved when marks are considered at school boards of examiners.

23.4 Anonymity must be preserved at faculty board of examiners, unless there is good reason to remove the anonymity for an individual student, which is judged to be in the student's interests. It is at the discretion of the chair of the board whether the removal of anonymity should be applied, on a case by case basis.

23.5 Students will be given a candidate number for retention until they have completed the programme of study.

## 24. Penalties

### ***For academic misconduct***

The *University's Examination Regulations* (annex 5) contain full details of the regulations and procedures to be followed in respect of academic misconduct, including plagiarism.

24.1 Information on what constitutes academic misconduct in respect of assessment (including clear definitions of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, impersonation and the use of inadmissible material) should be provided, or referenced by a web link, in school handbooks together with specific information about the consequences of such misconduct. It may be necessary for individual schools to develop additional guidance on what constitutes academic misconduct, to reflect the relevant academic discipline.

24.2 When recommending a penalty to a Board of Examiners, an appropriately constituted committee/panel will consider the offence and penalty independently of its potential impact on the student's degree classification. Whether the penalty for offence in question should be reflected in the degree class to be awarded is the judgement of the board. In such cases, Boards of Examiners should take into account any effect on the degree classification that the penalty already has had.

### ***For the late submission of summative coursework***

24.3 Students must be made aware of the existence of penalties for not meeting submission deadlines. These should be clearly specified in writing to students and staff at the beginning of the programme / unit, preferably in the programme / unit handbook.

24.4 Faculties' policies on the penalties for the late submission of undergraduate summative coursework, should be in accordance with the following:

- a) Faculties should adopt an approach to the late submission of coursework within the framework provided and their schools should ensure that the policy is communicated to students at the outset of their studies, stated in student handbooks and re-iterated at the start of teaching of each unit;
- b) Schools should ensure that students from other schools or faculties who register for their units are made explicitly aware of the faculty policy on the late submission of coursework;
- c) Coursework that is submitted after a deadline should be subject to some penalty, unless an extension has been agreed by the School, prior to the deadline, or late submission is justified by reason of illness or other validated extenuating circumstance (see section 27);
- d) For work submitted up to 24 hours after the agreed submission deadline, a penalty of 10 marks out of 100 (or 3 marks out of 20) from the actual mark the student would have received applies (e.g. coursework that is marked at 60/100 would become 50/100 or a mark of 10/20 would become 7/20) once the penalty is applied);

- e) For work submitted seven calendar days after the submission deadline the student will receive a mark of 0, although schools may still require work of a satisfactory standard to be submitted in order for credit to be awarded;
- f) Faculties should decide on the rate of reduction, by day or at specific thresholds, for late submissions made after the 24 hour period but within 7 days. In setting the rate by which the mark is reduced the weighting of the assessment may be taken into account;
- g) Any penalty applied should be in the form of a mark reduction from the mark the student would have achieved.

***For exceeding the size limit in summative coursework***

24.5 Faculties' policies for defining the size limit of summative coursework, by assessment type, and the penalty for exceeding the defined limit, for its taught programmes, should be in accordance with the following:

- a) That it includes:
  - Whether specific forms of coursework are subject to a size limit, and if so:
  - Whether the size limit is defined by reference to the number of pages (with font size, line spacing, margin size, and page orientation requirements), by a word / character limit or other defined limit.
  - The penalty where the defined limit is exceeded.
- b) Students must be informed in writing, at or before the date of issue of the coursework, the size limit and the penalty for exceeding the limit, if any, which shall accord with the approved unit specification. This information should also be provided on the cover sheet for the submission of the coursework.
- c) The policy of the faculty that owns the unit will apply. It is important for students whose home programme is based in a different faculty are made fully aware that the policy applied in the submission of coursework for a unit may be different than the policy of their home faculty.
- d) It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the work complies with the defined size limit prior to submission and to certify the size (word or page length or other defined limit) on the front cover sheet when submitting the work.
- e) The student in question must be informed of the decision to apply the penalty for exceeding the defined size limit.

## F. ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCESSES FOR DETERMINING PROGRESS AND AWARDS

### 25. Bodies and Roles Responsible for Determining Progression and Awards

#### **Faculty Education Directors**

25.1 It is the responsibility of the Faculty Education Directors to ensure that university and faculty regulations, policies and procedures with respect to these Regulations and Code are implemented in their faculties. In doing this they will work closely with schools, Faculty Education Managers and each Faculty Quality Enhancement Team (FQET).

#### **Programme Directors<sup>\*3</sup>**

25.2 Programme Directors must be familiar with all regulations that relate to their programme including this Code.

25.3 The Programme Director is responsible for the quality assurance of the programme for which he or she is responsible, including Annual Programme Review arrangements and feedback on the programme.

#### **Internal examiners**

*All internal and external examiners must ensure that they are fully informed about these Regulations and Code.*

25.4 Heads of School should nominate an individual to be responsible for liaising with the External Examiner. This would normally be the Programme Director or the Examinations Officer. It must be clear to all concerned who will undertake this role.

25.5 Internal examiners are normally the individuals responsible for assessment in the relevant unit. The curriculum vitae of all internal examiners who are not on academic pathways one and three, including anyone not holding academic status at the University, should be submitted annually by the school for approval by the relevant faculty board/s. Internal examiners are expected to attend the meeting(s) of the relevant board of examiners. Each faculty should have a policy on the quoracy of its boards of examiners.

25.6 An internal examiner nominated by the Head of School should take academic responsibility for the unit's summative assessment. This person should ensure that the following tasks are completed satisfactorily: the setting of papers, liaising with external examiners, preparing any relevant assessment and marking criteria, leading teams of markers (where appropriate), ensuring a proper process of internal verification and agreeing sets of marks. The nominated internal examiner is responsible to the school board of examiners.

25.7 The nominated internal examiner is responsible for establishing procedures at school level to enter and check the marks for each individual piece of assessed work which forms the basis for examiners' meetings.

25.8 He or she is also responsible for ensuring back-up systems are in place for electronic storage and transmission systems.

#### **School examinations officer(s)**

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<sup>3</sup> *In the Faculty of Arts, the Graduate Officer is the programme director for all Master's programmes within a School. In addition, there are MA co-ordinators in each School. In the School of Law, the Director of Graduate Studies undertakes most aspects of this role except admissions.*

- 25.9 School examinations officer(s) will be appointed by the Head of School. Their role is to organise and co-ordinate the school's assessment processes, from the preparation of examination papers provided by internal examiners to the accurate recording of assessment marks and their presentation to the School and Faculty Boards of Examiners.
- 25.10 School examinations officer(s) are the principal line of communication of the School with the Faculty and to the University Examinations Office (Academic Registry).

### **External examiners**

- 25.11 The University's Policy for the External Examining of Taught Programmes provides full details of the role of external examiners and the University's external examining processes (see annex 8).

### **School boards of examiners**

- 25.12 This section should be viewed alongside *Ordinance 17, Assessment for Academic Awards*, which includes details of the constitution and requirements for Boards of Examiners.
- 25.13 A School Board of Examiners may be convened at a School, Departmental or a programme level. The board must consist of at least three people and are convened to approve each undergraduate and taught postgraduate academic award of the University. Membership of initial boards of examiners normally includes the internal and external examiners for each subject or group of subjects in the programme of study for the award. Such boards make recommendations to the Faculty Boards of Examiners to the faculty in which the degree is awarded. External examiners are normally required to be present at the meetings of the School Board of Examiners for all programmes which lead to a University award, and to which they have been appointed as external examiner.
- 25.14 The Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry and Medical and Veterinary Sciences may choose to convene separate 'unit' boards of examiners as well as programme boards to reflect the nature of their professional programmes. A unit board of examiners must also consist of at least three people.
- 25.15 Discussions held at the programme or school board of examiners are confidential. The procedure for disclosing marks and results to students is outlined in section 28.
- 25.16 A designated member of the board of examiners must take responsibility for overseeing the processing of marks at all stages of the assessment procedure.
- 25.17 The written records of all meetings of boards of examiners should be kept and communicated to the Faculty Board of Examiners. This should contain adequate details of the discussion of borderline cases and where individual medical or other extenuating circumstances are presented. A record should be kept of how and why decisions were taken (i.e. the reasons for each decision).
- 25.18 Schools should ensure they give as much notice as possible to all board members of the dates of board of examiner meetings and other occasions on which they may be required to be present so that the quoracy of the board of examiners is met.
- 25.19 School Boards of Examiners should determine the range of assessed material and, where appropriate, the evidence relating to the award of marks for that assessed work that will be subject to moderation.
- 25.20 In some circumstances, in addition to marks, student work may be made available at the meeting of School Boards of Examiners (e.g. where low marks achieved in

one part of a programme are being considered against additional work done by the student).

- 25.21 School Boards of Examiners should assure themselves that elements of formative work that is also used for summative purposes should be subject to moderation and should establish a mechanism to verify the authenticity of that work (i.e. that it is the student's own work and it is as it was originally submitted). See section 21 for details on internal verification / moderation.
- 25.22 School Boards of Examiners should assure themselves that the guidelines which determine the selection of scripts that the external examiner receives are adhered.
- 25.23 It is the responsibility of the School Board of Examiners to draw the Faculty Board of Examiner's attention to issues it wishes to raise. It should also refer complex cases, including those of unusual profile students (e.g. where a student is awarded a zero mark as a result of plagiarism) to the Faculty Board of Examiners.
- 25.24 A Faculty Education Director, or nominee, may attend school board of examiners in order to aid interpretation of the new policy for progression and classification and provide insight on particularly complex cases.

### **Faculty boards of examiners**

- 25.25 The role of the Faculty Board of Examiners includes: assuring fair and consistent treatment of candidates and their results across all schools in the faculty; monitoring assessment trends and any major deviations from norms faculty-wide; and receiving and assuring the appropriateness of subject specific marking criteria in the light of the agreed university wide generic marking criteria.
- 25.26 The decision to approve the award result and confer a student is only final when approved by the Faculty Board of Examiners. Until this occurs student's results are deemed to be provisional and subject to confirmation.
- 25.27 The remit of the Faculty Board of Examiners is outlined in *Ordinance 17* as:

3 (b) ... *The faculty examination board shall be chaired by the dean or his or her nominee and its composition shall be determined by the faculty board. The faculty examination board shall not question the academic judgement of the initial examination board, but shall ensure that proper procedures have been carried out, and that the treatment of special cases is fair across the faculty, including consideration given for illness and personal problems affecting a student's performance, the award of aegrotat degrees and penalties imposed for plagiarism. Within this remit, the faculty examination board shall have the power to accept or amend recommendations made by the initial examination board.*

- 25.28 The responsibility of the Faculty Board of Examiners in alleged cases of cheating or plagiarism is outlined in the *Examination Regulations*:

*If the alleged offence of cheating or plagiarism is considered by the chair of the school board of examiners, in consultation with the undergraduate or graduate dean of the faculty, to be more serious than should be handled at school level, taking into account the criteria listed [in section 8], the chair of the school board of examiners will notify the student in writing that the case will be referred to the chair of the faculty board of examiners. The student will also be informed, at this stage, whether any other examination scripts or pieces of work are under consideration.*

- 25.29 Discussions held at the Faculty Board of Examiners are confidential, subject to where the relevant record of discussion of an individual student is requested and provided to the student (see 27.37). The procedure for disclosing marks and results to students is outlined in section 28.

- 25.30 A record of each meeting of the Faculty Board of Examiners must be kept, including the reasons for decisions and how they are taken. This record must contain adequate details of the discussion of borderline cases and where individual medical, or other extenuating circumstances, are taken into account.
- 25.31 A meeting of the Faculty Board of Examiners should be held shortly after the January examination period to check and verify the marks achieved in order for the confirmed marks to be released to students. Formal decisions on progression may be made by the Board at this meeting in cases where it is possible for a final progression decision to be made on the basis of the marks achieved in the first teaching block.
- 25.32 Faculty Boards may decide that boards of examiners that make decisions about the progression of students should be named and constituted differently (e.g. Faculty Progress Committee). In such cases, the responsibilities and powers of these boards as set out in the Code are exactly the same as for Faculty Board of Examiners.

## **26. Pass Mark**

- 26.1 Within modular honours programmes, students must achieve at least 40 out of 100 to pass undergraduate (level 4-6) units.
- 26.2 Within the professional programmes in the faculties of Medicine and Dentistry and Medical and Veterinary Sciences, students must achieve at least 50 out of 100 to pass at the unit/element level.
- 26.3 The pass mark set by the University for any level 7 (M) unit is 50 out of 100.
- 26.4 Where taught postgraduate programmes include units at level 6 (H) or lower the pass mark for those units remains 40 out of 100. Marks for these units must be taken into account in the calculation of the final programme mark and cannot be adjusted.

## **27. Extenuating circumstances**

Guidance on student absence during the teaching period due to illness or other cause is provided at section 12. The regulatory procedure for consideration of extenuating circumstances is provided in the Examination Regulations (section 10, annex 5).

- 27.1 Extenuating circumstances are circumstances external to study within the university that a student believes has affected their performance in assessment.
- 27.2 The effects that properly reported extenuating circumstances have on a student's performance must be considered by boards of examiners when making progression, completion or classification decisions.

### **The reporting of extenuating circumstances**

- 27.3 The reporting of extenuating circumstances and their effects is the responsibility of the student.
- 27.4 A student must use the university's extenuating circumstances form in order to notify the University of any extenuating circumstances that may have affected his or her ability to fulfil the criteria for the award of credit points or to perform to the best of his or her ability in assessment events.



- 27.5 If a student wishes a board of examiners to take any extenuating circumstances into account, the completed extenuating circumstances form must be submitted to the relevant school office before the meeting of the board of examiners at which the student's performance in assessment is considered. A written record must be kept of such matters.
- 27.6 Extenuating circumstances that could have been raised before the meeting of the relevant board of examiners, but without good reason were not raised, will not be considered in the event of an appeal.
- 27.7 Schools should ensure that advice to students is available about the nature of the evidence that they will need to provide to supplement the information supplied in the University's form for extenuating circumstances.
- 27.8 Information must be provided to students by schools and faculties on the procedure for the treatment of medical and other extenuating circumstances. This information should include:
- the procedure that should be followed;
  - the importance of informing the school about medical or other extenuating circumstances prior to the meeting of the relevant extenuating circumstances committee
  - the date of the relevant board of examiners meeting;
  - the correct person in the school to be provided with documentation of evidence and how it will be stored.
- 27.9 Schools should ensure that their procedures are arranged so the number of copies of papers detailing extenuating circumstances is kept to a minimum.

### **Extenuating Circumstances Committees**

27.10 A small extenuating circumstances committee shall be established to consider the extenuating circumstances that may have affected a student's performance in assessment.

27.11 An Extenuating Circumstances Committee (previously known as the Special Circumstances Committee) for each programme must be established at a level determined by the relevant Faculty Board.

27.12 The composition of an Extenuating Circumstances Committee will be subject to the approval of the chair of the relevant Faculty Board of Examiners. It should include the chair of the School Board of Examiners, to which it reports, and the relevant examinations officer and senior tutor.

27.13 The Extenuating Circumstances Committee will meet as soon as is convenient before each meeting of the School Board of Examiners to which it reports.

27.14 The role of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee is to evaluate whether or not extenuating circumstances may have affected the candidate's capacity to perform. It shall determine:

- which (if any) assessments or units may have been affected by the circumstances drawn to its attention;
- whether the circumstance is deemed to have been reasonably within the student's control, evidenced and/or sufficiently serious to warrant an allowance;

- the period of time over which the student's performance was impaired and whether the extenuating circumstance was acute (of short duration and only likely to have had a negative impact upon the student's performance in the assessment) or chronic (over a significant period of time and therefore likely to have had an impact upon their learning as well as their performance in the assessment);
- whether the impact on the student's capacity to perform is likely to have been mild, moderate or severe;
- whether sufficient allowance for the circumstances has already been made, for example, by making special arrangements for examinations or by granting extensions to deadlines.

The committee may also wish to comment upon the degree of confidence that it has on the impact of the reported circumstances given the evidence available, if it feels it is necessary to do so.

- 27.15 It is not the role of the extenuating circumstances committee to determine the effect, if any, on the candidate's results. All decisions on the accommodation of the effects of extenuating circumstances on progression and awards will be made by the board of examiners.
- 27.16 The extenuating circumstances committee should use its discretion and judgement in deciding on the severity and impact in any particular case.
- 27.17 If the committee is unable to classify the circumstance, particularly in complex cases, it should flag and recommend to the relevant Board of Examiners that professional advice is sought to help in the interpretation of existing evidence and/or supplementary evidence.
- 27.18 The committee must note the reasons underlying its decisions and these notes, along with information on the period of time in which the circumstances affected the student and the assessments / forms of learning that were affected, should form its report to the Board of Examiners.
- 27.19 The relevant minute of the extenuating circumstances committee should be made available to a student on request.
- 27.20 Information about the precise medical or other extenuating circumstances of the candidate must remain confidential to the extenuating circumstances committee.
- 27.21 The Faculty or School should establish a procedure for ensuring that judgements are as consistent and robust as possible, in-year and year-on-year.

### **Consideration of extenuating circumstances by boards of examiners**

27.22 The School Board of Examiners will receive the report provided by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee and consider the case of each student who has presented extenuating circumstances, and then determine the effect, if any, on the candidate's results.

- 27.23 The School Board of examiners will determine whether a student's performance has been substantially affected by extenuating circumstances beyond their control and what action, if any, is required to take into account these circumstances, as is fair and reasonable.
- 27.24 The options that will normally be considered by a Board of Examiners in the cases described follow but are not exhaustive.

In all cases, students who are absent from an examination due to illness and who self-certificate (see 12.4), will be required to undertake the examination in the next standard examination period without penalty.

27.25 In the case of non-final year undergraduate students on modular programmes, if a student has extenuating circumstances which have been accepted, the School Board of Examiners may decide to (but not exclusively):

- take no action;
- permit the student to repeat the assessment without penalty (i.e. as for the first attempt);
- award credit for the affected unit(s), notwithstanding a fail mark, on the basis of performance in other contexts within the unit(s);
- permit the student to repeat the entire year of study again or undertake a supplementary year (depending upon the amount of credit in the year of study the student has already achieved) without penalty;
- place the report on the extenuating circumstances on file for consideration by the board of examiners when they make an award to the student.

27.26 In the case of final year undergraduate students on modular programmes, if a student has extenuating circumstances which have been accepted, the School Board of Examiners may decide to (but not exclusively):

- take no action;
- permit the student to repeat the assessment without penalty (i.e. as for the first attempt);
- award credit for the affected unit(s), notwithstanding a fail mark, on the basis of performance in other contexts;
- disregard the affected mark for the purposes of calculating the final programme mark and degree classification
- permit the student to repeat the entire year of study or undertake a supplementary year (depending upon the amount of credit in the year of study the student has already achieved) without penalty;
- award a classified degree, under Ordinance 18, where a student is prevented by illness or other substantial cause from completing a minor part of assessment and the Board is unable to make an academic award under any other of the University's regulations.
- award an Aegrotat degree, under Ordinance 18.

27.27 In the case of undergraduates on non-modular undergraduate programmes, if a student has extenuating circumstances which have been accepted, the Board of Examiners may decide to (but not exclusively):

- take no action;
- permit the student to repeat the assessment without penalty (i.e. as for the first attempt);
- permit the student to repeat the entire year of study again as for the first time (although the School Board of Examiners may also apply supplementary conditions for progression).

27.28 For taught postgraduate students in the taught component of the programme, if a student has extenuating circumstances which have been accepted, the Board of Examiners may decide to (but not exclusively):

- take no action;
- permit the student to repeat the assessment without penalty (i.e. as for the first attempt);
- award credit for the affected unit(s), notwithstanding a fail mark, on the basis of performance in other contexts within the unit(s);
- disregard the affected mark for the purposes of progression;
- permit the student to repeat the entire taught component or undertake a supplementary year (depending upon the amount of credit the student has already achieved) without penalty;
- award an Aegrotat degree, under Ordinance 18;
- place the report on the extenuating circumstances on file for consideration by the board of examiners when they make an award to the student.

27.29 For taught postgraduate students in the dissertation component of the programme, if a student has extenuating circumstances which have been accepted, the Board of Examiners may, depending upon the categorised impact of the circumstance, decide to:

- Take no action;
- Allow the re-submission of the dissertation where the student has achieved a mark of less than 45 out of 100 without penalty.

27.30 The manipulation of the mark itself should be considered only as a last resort and applied in exceptional acute circumstances by a higher mark being awarded on the basis of performance in other contexts.

27.31 Where a student has successfully completed a unit but the board of examiners considers that their performance was impaired by extenuating circumstances, then this will be put on file for consideration by the relevant board of examiners at a future point.

27.32 A Board of Examiners must consider the effect of extenuating circumstances from previous years, if applicable, on its decision-making (e.g. the application of the secondary rule for classification).

27.33 Each recommended allowance made by School Boards of Examiners with respect to extenuating circumstances will be presented to the Faculty Board of Examiners for approval.

27.34 The Faculty Board of Examiners will ensure:

- that students are being treated consistently across the faculty;
- that decisions are consistent with respect to the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes;
- that a fair outcome is achieved, particularly with respect to complex cases.

27.35 Faculty Boards of Examiners may wish to seek professional advice e.g. medical opinion prior to making a decision, particularly if chronic circumstances are involved.

- 27.36 The chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners may appoint committees to advise the Board on the treatment of students with extenuating circumstances as he or she thinks fit. All decisions are reserved to the Faculty Board of Examiners itself.
- 27.37 Boards of Examiners must keep a written record of the decisions made with respect to extenuating circumstances and the basis on which they were made. The relevant record must be made available to a student to which it applies on request.

### **Disability and extenuating circumstances**

- 27.38 The University has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustment where a provision, criterion or practice, including those for the consideration of extenuating circumstances, places disabled students at a substantial disadvantage.
- 27.39 A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia, developmental disorders such as Asperger syndrome and attention deficit conditions, long-term health conditions and mental health difficulties such as depression / anxiety.
- 27.40 Disability is diagnosed by a suitable professional, such as a GP/consultant, psychiatrist or psychologist. All evidence from a professional must be accepted at face value; where the evidence provided is felt to be unclear or ambiguous, Disability Services are able to advise.
- 27.41 Boards of examiners are obliged to consider the effects of a disability and make reasonable adjustments such that the student is not disadvantaged by his or her disability.
- 27.42 The duty of making a reasonable adjustment for the effects of a disability may require relaxing or setting aside the provisions of the Regulations and Code of Practice both directly with respect to the effects of the disability, and indirectly through the capacity of the student to follow its requirements in other matters.
- 27.43 Boards of examiners are not under any obligation to relax or make reasonable adjustments to any academic, medical or other standard applied by the University for the purpose of determining whether or not a student meets a particular competence standard. On this basis, a board will not normally raise the marks of a student or award credit for a unit which a student has failed (although each case needs to be assessed individually).
- 27.44 Each case must be considered on its own merits, taking into account the individual circumstances of the student and any supporting evidence, as well as the nature of the programme and the related competence standards.
- 27.45 Where a student has a Disability Support Summary, the nature of the disability has not changed since the Summary was drawn up, and the provisions of that Summary have been carried out, a Board of Examiners will not treat the effects of a disability on an assessment as an 'extenuating circumstance' since a reasonable adjustment to the assessment will have already been made.
- 27.46 Boards of Examiners must make reasonable adjustments that accommodate changes in the disability with time either because it is unsteady in nature, or its effects fluctuate, or the student receives a diagnosis and treatment over an assessment period.

- 27.47 Previous attendance at an examination or any other assessment is not a deciding factor when subsequently considering whether a reasonable adjustment for disability should be made.
- 27.48 Students should report adverse effects of their disability on their study or assessment that are not present on their Disability Support Summary using the University's extenuating circumstances form, unless the nature of their disability prevents them doing so.
- 27.49 In all cases, where there is any doubt about how evidence of a disability should be treated and it is unclear what course of action should be taken, advice should be sought from the University's Equality and Diversity Manager.

## **28. Treatment and Publication of Results**

### ***Disclosure of marks and results***

- 28.1 There is no general requirement to return examination scripts to candidates but schools should share examination results with students wherever this would make a useful contribution to formative feedback. Faculties should adopt a consistent policy on this matter. Staff should be aware that any comments made by examiners, in relation to a specific candidate, with respect to any assessment, including coursework, must be disclosed to the candidate, if she or he makes a formal request under the Data Protection Act 1998. However, this should not inhibit markers from making appropriate comments to indicate why, in their judgement, a script or piece of work merits the mark awarded.
- 28.2 No marks that contribute to examination results should be disclosed to students until they have been agreed by the Faculty Board of Examiners unless they are clearly identified as being provisional.
- 28.3 A detailed breakdown of results should only be disclosed to the individual receiving the award. Faculties must have clear procedures for such disclosure of marks.
- 28.4 Degree results may be published on school notice boards or websites at the discretion of the relevant school(s). The identity of the student must be protected when publishing these results (e.g. by using the students' University of Bristol numbers not names).
- 28.5 Schools should ensure that there are arrangements following the meeting of the Faculty Board of Examiners for appropriate members of staff to be available to advise students of the results agreed by the board of examiners for individual papers or units and, where appropriate, to advise whether the board of examiners took account of any extenuating circumstances. In disclosing marks to students, staff should take care not to enter into discussion about the apparent fairness or otherwise of the mark(s) agreed by the board of examiners. Staff should advise students of any recommendations already reported to or going forward to the progress committee or faculty board regarding any failure; investigate any extenuating circumstances raised by the student that could not reasonably have been made known at an earlier stage, and advise the student of his/her right to make representations. Faculty offices should arrange, in appropriate cases, for this advice to be communicated in writing to the student, stating clearly the date by which they should make representations either in writing or in a personal interview with designated staff, or the Undergraduate or Graduate Faculty Education Director or the Dean.
- 28.6 Students making representations to staff, a Faculty Education Director or the Dean regarding any disputed decision of a Board of Examiners should be informed of their

right to make a formal appeal under section 11 of the Examination Regulations.

28.7 Faculties and schools must bear in mind the need to comply with the Data Protection Act when disclosing personal information. Guidance about compliance with the Data Protection Act can be obtained from the Secretary's Office.

### **Transcripts**

- 28.8 The transcript is intended to provide useful information to potential employers or to other universities (in the case of credit transfer) and to facilitate better understanding of the student's level of attainment overall and in individual units.
- 28.9 For the purpose of transcripts and credit transfer, the University will make it clear how the student has performed in assessments relating both to the achievement of credit points and to overall performance.
- 28.10 The transcript in the approved format will show a single mark for each unit, which represents the mark agreed by the Board of Examiners. This might be a combined mark to take into account different elements of assessment such as written work, practicals, coursework etc.
- 28.11 A copy of the transcript, in the approved format, will be provided automatically to students on completion of their studies. Subsequently, a charge will be levied for the provision of transcripts to graduated students.

### **Retention of Student Work**

- 28.12 Schools should judge what summatively-assessed work needs to be retained so to ensure that such work is available in the case of appeal. For this reason, the work of a student would not normally be retained for longer than a year following graduation.
- 28.13 Schools should also take into account the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, where relevant.

## **29. Appeals against decisions of the Boards of Examiners**

- 29.1 All information concerning the University's regulations for appeals against the decisions of Boards of examiners is contained in annex 5, the *University's Examination Regulations*.
- 29.2 It is essential to address a student's representation against a decision of a board of examiners as early as possible, and initially within the respective school and faculty. Students must be made aware of section 11 of the *Examination Regulations* governing appeals, with particular attention drawn to the 15 working day deadline from the date of notification of the decision for submitting a formal appeal. Students should also be reminded that a degree cannot be conferred whilst an appeal is ongoing.
- 29.3 The student's eligibility to graduate at a degree congregation will depend on the degree being confirmed by a specific date, normally two weeks prior to the start of the degree congregation (the precise deadline date is set by the examinations and degree congregation offices annually). Appeals that have not been resolved by this date will result in the student being offered the opportunity to graduate at the next available ceremony.
- 29.4 Information on the University's student complaints procedure can be found at [www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/studentrulesregs/complaints.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/studentrulesregs/complaints.html).

## G. REGULATIONS AND POLICIES FOR DETERMINING PROGRESSION AND AWARDS

### 30. Student Progression and Completion in Undergraduate Modular Programmes

This section refers to the regulations and policies for student progression and completion of students on undergraduate modular programmes newly registered from the 2011-12 academic year. Students newly registered before the 2011-12 academic year are covered by the previous regulations, unless a student departs from their cohort and returns to join a cohort of students that are governed by the new regulations, at which point he or she will become subject to those new regulations (see 1.6).

A flow diagram of the options available for the progression of students on taught programmes is available at annex 11.

30.1 If there is a discrepancy, these rules have primacy over Faculty Standing Orders, or equivalent faculty-level rules or regulations, with regard to the progression and completion of students newly registered on undergraduate modular programmes from the 2011-12 academic year.

30.2 For the purposes of **awarding credit** for an individual unit, the actual mark for each unit is rounded to the nearest integer.

30.3 For the purposes of **determining progression** from year to year, the actual unit mark is used to calculate the year mark. The result of the calculation of the overall average mark achieved for the year should be rounded to the nearest integer for the purpose of applying 30.12.

30.4 If a student fails to achieve the credit points, but there is evidence that their performance at the time of the assessment is likely to have been affected by extenuating circumstances, the provisions in section 27 'Extenuating Circumstances', will apply.

#### ***The award of credit for the purposes of progression in undergraduate modular programmes***

30.5 Students must achieve the pass mark for the unit (normally a mark of 40 out of 100 at levels 4-6 and 50 out of 100 at level 7) and meet any additional criteria<sup>4</sup>, if applicable, to be awarded the associated credit. The criteria for the award of credit points, and an explanation of how the award of credit may be affected by criteria additional to marks in an examination or other formal assessment, must be explicitly described in the relevant unit specification and communicated to the students in advance of the commencement of their study of the unit.

30.6 By reaching a satisfactory standard, students thereby acquire the necessary credit points to progress, *except as specified below*.

30.7 Except for students in the final year of their undergraduate programme (see 30.18-21) or who are registered at another institution but studying at Bristol, a student who is not awarded the credit for a unit may be permitted a second attempt to achieve a satisfactory standard to progress (i.e. a re-sit) or to achieve any specified additional criteria. A re-sit need not be in the same form as the original assessment, as long as

<sup>4</sup> Additional criteria may include: reaching a satisfactory standard in the completion of a report, other form of written work, or practical work which is deemed essential to understanding the academic discipline the student is studying; a sufficient record of attendance at teaching sessions; or, the acquisition of professional skills.



it tests the same learning outcomes, does not compromise any competence standards, and applies to the entire cohort of students who are undertaking the re-assessment.

A re-sit should normally be completed prior to progression to the following year of study, within the University's recognised examination periods.

- 30.8 In order to be permitted a second attempt (i.e. re-sit) in any failed unit(s), undergraduate students must gain at least 40 credit points for the year of study by achieving the pass mark at the first attempt AND must have satisfied any additional criteria at the time they are considered by a board of examiners, or equivalent.
- 30.9 A student will not be permitted a re-sit where he or she has already fulfilled the criteria for the award of credit points for the unit. As detailed in section 27, a Board of Examiners must consider the effect of previous extenuating circumstances, if applicable, on its decision-making (e.g. the application of the secondary rule for classification).
- 30.10 A student must acquire the necessary credit before progressing to the next year of study. Where it has not been possible for the relevant board of examiners to consider the student's formal progress prior to a student commencing an industrial placement or a formal period of study at another institution as required by the programme structure, the Chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners may permit the student to register for the next year of study without the necessary credit, pending and subject to the decision of the board of examiners.
- 30.11 If a student does not achieve the criteria set out in 30.8, she or he will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award, if appropriate; unless there are validated extenuating circumstances (see section 27).
- 30.12 Notwithstanding 30.7, the relevant Board of Examiners will award credit to an undergraduate student to permit progression, despite failure to achieve a pass mark associated with taught unit(s) at the first attempt (i.e. a 'compensated pass'), provided conditions (a)-(f) are satisfied.
- a) The total of the units failed in the year of study does not exceed 20 credit points.
  - b) The relevant unit mark is within the specified range (35-39 out of 100 for level 4-6 units or 45-49 out of 100 for level 7 units) at the first attempt.
  - c) The student has a year mark from all the taught units in the year of study of at least 40 out of 100.
  - d) The student has not failed a unit that is deemed by the faculty or a professional body as being 'must pass' (see annex 1 for definition).
  - e) Fulfils all other requirements for the award of credit, as stated in the programme and/or unit specification, such as:
    - *completion of practical work, e.g. field courses, laboratory sessions, language tuition, etc, deemed essential to understanding the academic discipline the student is studying;*
    - *a combination of coursework and practical work, supplemented by a record of attendance at teaching sessions, e.g. tutorials or laboratory sessions;*
    - *the acquisition of professional skills and attributes required in disciplines such as education, the health professions or the performing arts.*

f) Satisfactorily completes any additional work deemed necessary, as determined by the relevant Board of Examiners, so as to enable the student to achieve the learning outcomes in the assessment(s) that they had failed.

- 30.13 Students who are permitted to progress as described in 30.12 (i.e. *notwithstanding a failed unit mark*) will be awarded and carry forward the actual unit mark they achieved at their first attempt (not the unit pass mark) and will only receive the credit for these unit/s upon final completion of the programme for which they are registered (i.e. at graduation).
- 30.14 A Faculty Board of Examiners, or equivalent faculty committee, may propose that a student who has not achieved sufficient credit points or other requirements for progression in one programme the opportunity to transfer to a cognate programme (see annex 6), particularly in cases where the student is unable to achieve the credit points in a discrete part of a programme (e.g. in a single unit or in half of a joint honours programme). The decision to accept or reject the proposed transfer will be at the discretion of the 'receiving' school.
- 30.15 If any student fails to achieve the unit pass mark following a re-sit of the unit or units equating to 20 credit points or less, she or he will be permitted a final opportunity to be re-assessed, normally as part of a 'supplementary year', in order to obtain the necessary credit points to progress. A student will only be permitted to undertake the supplementary year **once** for this reason during their programme of study. Students who are placed on a supplementary year will be registered on the unit(s) they have failed. A board of examiners has the discretion to require students to register for additional units, appropriate to their programme of study (information on the supplementary year is available at section 15 and annex 12).
- 30.16 If any student fails to achieve the unit pass mark following a re-sit of the unit or units equating to more than 20 credit points, he or she will be required to withdraw from the programme, with an exit award, if appropriate.
- 30.17 For any unit which is passed by re-assessment, the student will receive the awarded mark for the re-assessment, however the unit mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark (40 out of 100 for units at levels 4, 5 and 6, and 50 out of 100 for units at level 7), even if the student achieves a higher mark in the re-assessment. The marks recorded when repeating the whole year or undertaking the supplementary year will also be capped at the minimum pass mark regardless of what marks are actually achieved, unless the student is being permitted to repeat the year or undertake a supplementary year "*as for the first time*" due to validated extenuating circumstances.

***The award of credit in the final year of undergraduate study for the purposes of completion***

- 30.18 Students must achieve the pass mark (normally a mark of 40 out of 100 at levels 4-6 and 50 out of 100 at level 7) and meet any additional criteria, as described in 30.5, if applicable for the unit, to be awarded the associated credit. By achieving this, students thereby acquire the necessary credit points in their final year to complete the programme of study, except as specified below.
- 30.19 Re-assessment of units within the final year of undergraduate modular programmes is only permitted, where, for *professional body accreditation reasons, the unit is deemed to be 'must-pass'*, in which case the Faculty Board of Examiners will offer the student a final re-assessment opportunity.
- 30.20 A Faculty Board of Examiners may choose to permit the award of 120 credit points for the final year of **undergraduate** study on the basis of a pass overall in

assessments undertaken in the final year. This may only be enacted in respect of a particular programme or group of programmes, and not in respect of individual students, and not after the event. A Faculty Board of Examiners may, likewise, choose to award 120 credit points for a full time year of study (or part time equivalent) in an Undergraduate Certificate or Diploma programme on the basis of a pass overall in the final assessment.

- 30.21 If a student does not obtain the necessary credit points in units that contribute to the final programme mark and/or degree classification, the degree may not be awarded and the student will receive a lower award, as determined by the University's credit framework (see section 3), unless the failure is due to certified illness or other validated extenuating circumstances, as detailed in Ordinance 18, and the associated '*Applying Ordinance 18 with respect to final year undergraduate students who have not completed all required assessment for academic award due to extenuating circumstances*' (annex 10).

### ***Additional requirements for progression within an Integrated Master's Degree***

The requirements for progression within Integrated Master's degrees have been revised for 2014/15. Where a higher progression requirement is being applied, this requirement will only apply to students who have newly registered on the programme from 2014/15. Existing students will continue to be subject to the regulations that were in place in the academic year in which they first registered on the programme.

- 30.22 Students studying on Integrated Master's degrees will have the same progression requirements as students on other modular degree programmes at the end of the first year.
- 30.23 At the end of the second year of study, students on an integrated master's degree are required to achieve a year mark of 60 or more out of one hundred if their programme has been designated an 'advanced study' type or 50 or more out of one hundred if their programme has been designated as a 'professional' type of programme (see 4.5).
- 30.24 Students who do not qualify for progression on an integrated master's degree at the end of the second year will be automatically transferred onto an equivalent Bachelor's degree provided that they meet the progression requirements for that programme.
- 30.25 At the end of the third year students on an integrated master's degree are required to achieve a year mark of 50 or more out of 100.
- 30.26 When a third year student does not qualify for progression on an integrated master's programme at the end of the third year, the Faculty Board of Examiners may award an Ordinary Degree or an equivalent Bachelor's degree where the student has successfully met all the criteria, as described in the programme specification.
- 30.27 In order to progress within the five-year Integrated Master's programme, "Engineering Design with Study in Industry" students must achieve a year mark of 50 or more out of 100 in years 2, 3, and 4 in order to progress. Those students who are awarded 120 credit points for the year but do not achieve a year mark of 50 or more out of 100: will either be automatically transferred onto an equivalent Bachelor's degree or, following completion of Year 4, the Faculty Board of Examiners may award an Ordinary Degree or an equivalent Honours degree where the student has successfully met all the criteria, as described in the programme specification.

30.28 Students on Integrated Master's programmes without a year abroad or in industry who wish to withdraw during their fourth year of study (fifth year for "Engineering Design with Study in Industry" students) should be considered by boards of examiners for the award of a Bachelor's degree in the usual manner.

***Progression within an Integrated Master's Degree to undertake the Study Abroad or Year in Industry***

30.29 In order to progress, within an Integrated Master's programme, onto the "Study Abroad" or "Year in Industry", students must achieve at least a year mark of 50 or more out of 100 in Year 1 and/or in Year 2 and must satisfy any additional criteria (which may include a higher threshold for the year mark or a specified mark in a particular unit or units) as required by a specific programme in order to ensure that students are well equipped for the year abroad or in industry. The additional criteria must be set out clearly in the programme specification and be made clear to students at the outset of their studies. Those students who are awarded 120 credit points for the year but do not achieve a year mark of 50 or more out of 100 and any additional other criteria will be automatically transferred onto the equivalent Bachelor's degree.

30.30 Students who wish to withdraw during the year following the year abroad or in industry will not normally be eligible for a Bachelor's degree as an exit award. Faculty boards of examiners may exceptionally award the appropriate Bachelor's degree to such students, where "exceptionally" shall mean:

- i. the student has completed the third year of study satisfactorily and successfully taken any required assessments;
- ii. the student is incapable of continuing their studies owing to documented, severe extenuating circumstances;
- iii. the boards of examiners have sufficient confidence in the third year results that they can satisfactorily award a classified degree;
- iv. the student has achieved the prescribed programme intended learning outcomes for the bachelor's award.

## **31 Student Progression and Completion in Taught Postgraduate Modular Programmes**

A flow diagram of the options available for the progression of students on taught programmes is available at annex 11.

31.1 If there is a discrepancy, these rules have primacy over Faculty Standing Orders, or equivalent faculty-level rules or regulations, with regard to the progression and completion of students newly registered on taught postgraduate programmes from the 2011-12 academic year.

31.2 For the purposes of **awarding credit** for an individual unit, the actual mark for each unit is rounded to the nearest integer.

31.3 For the purposes of **determining progression** from the taught to the dissertation component, the unit mark is used to calculate the taught component mark. The result of the calculation of the overall average mark achieved for the taught component should be rounded to the nearest integer for the purpose of applying 31.12.

31.4 If a student fails to achieve the credit points, but there is evidence that their performance at the time of the examination is likely to have been affected by

extenuating circumstances, the provisions in section 27 'Extenuating Circumstances' will apply.

***The award of credit for the purposes of progression or completion of award in taught postgraduate modular programmes***

- 31.5 Students must achieve the pass mark for the unit (normally a mark of 40 out of 100 at levels 4-6 and 50 out of 100 at level 7) and meet any additional criteria, if applicable, to be awarded the associated credit. The criteria for the award of credit points, and an explanation of how the award of credit may be affected by criteria additional to marks in an examination or other formal assessment, must be explicitly described in the relevant unit specification and communicated to the students in advance of the commencement of their study of the unit.
- 31.6 By reaching a satisfactory standard, students thereby acquire the necessary credit points to progress, *except as specified below*.
- 31.7 A student who is not awarded the credit for a unit may be permitted a second attempt to achieve a satisfactory standard to progress (i.e. a 're-sit') or to achieve any specified additional criteria. A "re-sit" need not be in the same form as the original assessment, as long as it: tests the same learning outcomes, does not compromise any competence standards; and applies to the entire cohort of students who are undertaking the re-assessment.
- A re-sit examination should normally take place as soon as possible after the learning experience within the University's recognised examination periods, while re-submission of essays and coursework should normally be within 4-6 weeks for full-time taught postgraduate students.
- 31.8 In order to be permitted a second attempt (i.e. re-sit) in any failed unit(s), taught postgraduate students must gain at least half of the credit points in the taught component by achieving the pass mark at the first attempt AND must have satisfied any additional criteria at the time they are considered by the progression board, or equivalent.
- 31.9 A student will not be permitted a re-sit where he or she has already fulfilled the criteria for the award of credit points for the unit. As detailed in section 27, a Board of Examiners must consider the effect of previous extenuating circumstances, if applicable, on its decision-making (e.g. progression from the taught component).
- 31.10 A student must acquire the necessary credit before progressing to the next component of study. The Faculty Board of Examiners can permit the student to register for the next component without the necessary credit, pending and subject to the decision of the board of examiners. Where it has not been possible for the relevant board of examiners to consider the student's formal progress prior to the commencement of the next component, the Chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners may permit the student to register for the next component without the necessary credit, pending and subject to the decision of the board of examiners.
- 31.11 If a student does not achieve the criteria set out in 31.8, she or he will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award, if appropriate; unless there are validated extenuating circumstances (see section 27). Faculties have discretionary authority to permit postgraduate students who have failed part, or all, of the taught component to re-sit for the purposes of achieving an exit award.
- 31.12 Notwithstanding 31.7, the relevant Board of Examiners will award credit to a taught postgraduate student to permit progression or completion, despite failure to achieve

a pass mark associated with taught unit(s) at the first attempt (i.e. a 'compensated pass'), provided conditions (a)-(f) are satisfied.

- a) Either, where the total of the taught credit points failed in the taught component does not exceed the normal permitted maximum value of a sixth of the total credit points for the award (typically, 30 credit points for a 180 credit point Masters programme, 20 credit points for a 120 credit point Diploma and 10 credit points for a 60 credit point Certificate)

Or, for programmes where the credit value of each and every unit in the taught component exceeds the maximum permitted value, as defined above, the total of the credit points failed does not exceed the value of the taught unit with the lowest amount of credit points.

- b) The relevant unit mark is within the specified range (35-39 out of 100 for level 4-6 units or 45-49 out of 100 for level 7 units) at the first attempt.
- c) The student has a taught component mark of at least 50 out of 100.
- d) The student has not failed a unit that is deemed by the faculty or a professional body as being 'must pass' (see annex 1 for definition).
- e) Fulfils all other requirements for the award of credit, as stated in the programme and/or unit specification, such as:
- *completion of practical work, e.g. field courses, laboratory sessions, language tuition, etc, deemed essential to understanding the academic discipline the student is studying;*
  - *a combination of coursework and practical work, supplemented by a record of attendance at teaching sessions, e.g. tutorials or laboratory sessions;*
  - *the acquisition of professional skills and attributes required in disciplines such as education, the health professions or the performing arts.*
- f) Satisfactorily completes any additional work deemed necessary, as determined by the relevant Board of Examiners, so as to enable the student to achieve the learning outcomes in the assessment(s) that they had failed.

31.13 Students who are permitted to progress as described in 31.12 (i.e. *notwithstanding a failed unit mark*) will be awarded and carry forward the actual unit mark they achieved at their first attempt (not the unit pass mark) and will only receive the credit for these unit/s upon final completion of the programme for which they are registered (i.e. at graduation).

31.14 If any student fails to achieve the unit pass mark following a re-sit of the unit, she or he will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award, if appropriate, or exceptionally, the relevant faculty Board of Examiners may permit a final opportunity to be re-assessed, normally as part of a 'supplementary year', in order to obtain the necessary credit points to progress. A student will only be permitted to undertake the supplementary year **once** for this reason during their programme of study.

Students who are placed on a supplementary year will be registered on the units they have failed, as well as any additional units as determined by the faculty (guidance on the supplementary year is available at section 15 and annex 12).

31.15 For any unit which is passed by re-assessment, the student will receive the awarded mark for the re-assessment, however the unit mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark (40 out of 100 for units at levels 4, 5 and 6, and 50 out of 100 for units at level 7), even if the student achieves a higher mark in the re-

assessment. The marks recorded when repeating the whole year or undertaking the supplementary year will also be capped at the minimum pass mark regardless of what marks are actually achieved, unless the student is being permitted to repeat the year or undertake a supplementary year “*as for the first time*” due to validated extenuating circumstances.

### **Award of credit for the dissertation in taught postgraduate programmes**

See also section 21 with regards to the ‘taught component mark’ and annex 16 for ‘Dissertations in Taught Postgraduate Programmes’.

- 31.16 Students must achieve the pass mark for the dissertation to be awarded the associated credit; by *reaching a satisfactory standard* students thereby acquire the necessary credit points to complete the programme of study, *except as specified below*.
- 31.17 Where a student has achieved a near-pass mark (45 or over but less than 50 out of 100 or equivalent on the 0-20 point scale) for the dissertation and, in addition, the examiners recommend that it is suitable for re-assessment, the relevant Board of Examiners may decide to permit the student to re-submit the dissertation, or equivalent.
- 31.18 Re-submission of the dissertation where the student has achieved a mark less than 45 out of 100 will be permitted *where failure is due to validated extenuating circumstances* (see section 27).
- 31.19 The recorded mark for any re-submitted dissertation will be *capped at the minimum pass mark* (50 out of 100) even if the student achieves a higher level of attainment in the re-assessment, except that where there is good cause for the initial failure (validated extenuating circumstances) the dissertation may be re-submitted “as though for the first time” and the mark achieved need not be capped.
- 31.20 Re-submission of the dissertation must normally be made within 3 months of the student being notified by the faculty Board of Examiners of its decision (and within 6 months for part-time students and 12 months for part-time variable students).
- 31.21 Where re-assessment of the dissertation is not permitted the student may be awarded a postgraduate diploma, if appropriate, by the relevant Board of Examiners, subject to the satisfactory accumulation of credit points. Whenever a Board decides that re-submission of the dissertation is not permitted, the reason(s) must be clearly documented in the meeting minutes.

## **32. Student Progression and Completion in Non-Modular Programmes (MB,ChB, BDS and BVSc)**

32.1 This section applies to all new registrations on the non-modular programmes of MB,ChB and BVSc at the University of Bristol from the **2012-13** academic year and supersedes previous regulations.

This section applies to all **new and currently** registered students on the BDS programme from the 2013-14 academic year and supersedes all previous regulations and standing orders.

Students on the MBChB and BVSc programmes registering before 2012-2013 will continue to be governed by the regulations that were in place in the 2011-12 academic year, for the duration of their programme of study, unless:

- i. A student departs from their cohort and returns to join a cohort of students that are governed by the new regulations (see 1.5), or;

- ii. A programme wishes to apply them to a current cohort of students, in which case it would need their consent with a caveat that the new progression rules would not disadvantage any student in comparison to application of the previous regulations.

32.2 It is the responsibility of the relevant Faculty Board of Examiners to determine whether or not a student has satisfactorily completed a unit or element and in doing so has satisfied the requirements for progression from year-to-year and for completion of the programme.

32.3 Consonant with professional body requirements, the teaching and learning in an entire year of study of the programmes is intentionally cohesive and complementary. On this basis students are required to demonstrate, and are subsequently judged upon, the ability to manage a workload at a standard appropriate to the time available. A component part of the teaching will not therefore be assessed in isolation (i.e. outside of the year of study in which it is taught). For this reason students on the professional programmes will not normally be permitted to undertake the 'supplementary year'.

32.4 Where a standard set pass mark is used for a summative assessment, candidates' marks will be adjusted for consideration by Faculty Board of Examiners and for subsequent publication so that the overall pass mark equates to 50 on a percentage scale.

32.5 Where extenuating circumstances may have affected the performance of a student in a summative assessment, section 27 'extenuating circumstances' will apply.

### ***Progression of Students***

32.6 Students must achieve a minimum standard by attaining the assigned pass mark for all units and any additional assessment (normally 50 on a percentage scale) and meet any additional criteria, if applicable, to progress to the next year of study. Any additional criteria must be explicitly described in the relevant programme standing orders and unit / programme specification and communicated to the students in advance of the commencement of their study.

#### **Failure to fulfil criteria for progression at the first attempt**

32.7 A student who fails ONE unit but achieves a mark of 40 or more out of 100 (following readjustment from any standard set pass mark assessment; see 32.4) will be permitted a second attempt (i.e. a 're-sit' or 're-assessment') to achieve a satisfactory standard in the same academic year in order to progress to the next year of study.

A student who fails ONE unit with a mark of less than 40 out of 100 (following readjustment from any standard set pass mark assessment; see 32.4) will also be permitted a second attempt but may be required to undertake additional assessment(s) within the unit or additional units, as specified in the programme's standing orders or regulations.

32.8 A student who does not achieve the pass mark in MORE THAN ONE unit will either, as specified in the programme's standing orders or regulations, be required by the Faculty Board of Examiners to:

- (i) re-sit the failed units in the same academic year (which may include a requirement to undertake additional assessment within the unit or additional units);
- (ii) re-sit all the units in the same academic year;
- (iii) repeat the year in its entirety as a second attempt; or,



(iv) withdraw from the programme with an exit award, if appropriate.

The Board of Examiners may take into account the student's academic progress to date (e.g. the average year mark) and their professional behaviour when considering the options for progression.

32.9 A student who fails a must-pass component of a unit will be considered to have failed the unit and therefore will be required to either re-sit the entire unit or only the must-pass component, as determined by the programme's standing orders, as a second attempt.

32.10 The opportunity to repeat a year of study for the purposes of progression (i.e. in years 1 - 4) is only available if a student has not previously repeated a year of study at an earlier stage of the programme. Notwithstanding this, a Faculty Board of Examiners may permit a student in their fifth and final year to repeat the entire year, subject to the student's academic progress to date.

#### Failure to fulfil the specified additional criteria<sup>5</sup> for progression at the first attempt

32.11 A student who does not achieve the additional criteria associated with the programme or a constituent unit(s), as specified in the programme's standing orders or regulations, will normally be permitted a second attempt to meet these criteria in order to progress to the next year of study.

#### Failure to fulfil criteria for progression at the second attempt

32.12 A student who fails to achieve the pass mark for any assessment, or to achieve the specified additional criteria, at the **second attempt** will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award, if appropriate, unless there are validated extenuating circumstances.

If a Faculty Board of Examiners permits a student to repeat the whole year of the programme in response to validated extenuating circumstances, it may also apply supplementary conditions for progression.

32.13 A second attempt need not be in the same form as the original assessment, as long as it: tests the same learning outcomes, does not compromise any competence standards, and applies to the entire cohort of students who are undertaking the assessment.

32.14 Within any unit where a constituent assessment(s) is passed as a second attempt, the recorded mark for the unit will be capped at the minimum pass mark. Where a student repeats the entire year, the recorded mark for all the units are capped at the minimum pass mark, even if the student had passed a unit at the first attempt.

### **33 Awards: Undergraduate Modular Programmes**

33.1 The following regulations apply to all **new** registrations from the 2010-11 academic year on an undergraduate programme so to calculate the final programme mark and/or degree classification. An example of the calculation to reach the final programme mark and degree classification in an undergraduate programme is provided in annex 13.

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<sup>5</sup> Additional criteria may include: regularly attending any prescribed activity; undertaking or attending a prescribed assessment; reaching a satisfactory standard in any work which is deemed essential to understanding the academic discipline the student is studying; demonstrating the ability to manage a workload appropriate to the time available; satisfying professionalism and/or fitness to practice requirements.

- 33.2 The various options for faculties to offer students who do not complete all the required assessment for honours classification in relation to Ordinance 18 are provided at annex 10.
- 33.3 No further regulations or rules will apply for the calculation of the degree classification **following** application of the common algorithm (i.e. the primary and secondary rule).
- 33.4 Rules which are inherent to the design of the programme, such as a requirement for the student to pass a project in order to graduate, must be approved and be described in the relevant programme specification, and be implemented **before** the algorithm is applied
- 33.5 Bands of marks for use in final degree classification in undergraduate modular programmes are as follows:

***All Faculties***

First Class Honours	70 and above
Second Class Honours, First Division	60-69
Second Class Honours, Second Division	50-59
Third Class Honours	40-49
Fail	39 and below

An Ordinary degree can be awarded if a student has successfully completed at least 300 credits with a minimum of 60 credits at level 6.

***Primary Rule for calculating the final programme mark and degree classification***

- 33.6 First year (undergraduate) marks will not contribute to the calculation of the final programme mark and/or degree classification. Additionally, units in any year of study that are pass/fail only will be disregarded in this calculation.
- 33.7 All units taken in the years of study that contribute to the final programme mark and/or degree classification will count towards the weighted average final mark. Where students are given exemption from units, due to accredited prior learning, see annex 15.
- 33.8 The weightings apply to years of study, **not** to the level of the units taken by a student within the year.
- 33.9 The default position is that within each faculty a single weighting rule for the years of study will apply, unless a faculty is able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of Education Committee, that more than one weighting rule is required because of the major differences between subjects within the faculty and/or professional body accreditation requirements. The agreed weightings for the programmes within each of the faculties are provided in annex 14.
- 33.10 Within each year of study the weighting given to the unit mark, in relation to the mean 'year mark', will correspond to the credit point value of the unit, e.g. the mark for a 20 credit point unit would be 1/6 of the whole year mark, if the student has to achieve 120 credit points during the year.
- 33.11 For the purposes of applying the primary and secondary rules, the final programme mark is calculated by averaging the weighted individual unit marks. The result of the calculation should then be rounded to the nearest integer. This must be done **PRIOR** to determining whether the final programme mark is within the borderline range.

33.12 The honours programme classification boundary ranges are based on marks out of 100 and are:

First / 2.1 equal to or more than 68 but less than 70

2.1 / 2.2 equal to or more than 58 but less than 60

2.2 / Third equal to or more than 48 but less than 50

Third / Fail equal to or more than 38 but less than 40

If the final summative programme mark falls within the range of one of these classification boundaries, the secondary rule will apply.

### **Secondary Rule**

33.13 If the final summative programme mark falls within the range of one of the classification boundaries, as set out in 33.12, the higher degree classification will only be awarded if 50% or more of the rounded individual unit marks, weighted by credit point value and year of study, which contribute to the degree classification are achieved at the higher class or classes, otherwise the lower class will be awarded.

33.14 It is the responsibility of the School Board of Examiners to consider and determine between classifications on the basis of the secondary rule.

## **34 Awards: Taught Postgraduate Modular Programmes**

34.1 The final programme mark is calculated by averaging the weighted individual unit marks. The result of the calculation should then be rounded to the nearest integer.

34.2 The weighting of each unit mark, in calculating the 'final programme mark', will correspond to the credit point value of the unit. See annex 13 for an example of how to do this calculation.

34.3 An award with Merit or Distinction is permitted for postgraduate taught masters, diplomas and certificates, where these are specifically named entry-level qualifications.

An award with Merit or Distinction is not permitted for exit awards where students are required to exit the programme on academic grounds.

An exit award with Merit or Distinction may be permitted where students are prevented by exceptional circumstances from completing the intended award.

34.4 The classification of the award in relation to the final programme mark is as follows:

Award with Distinction	at least 65 out of 100 for the taught component overall and, for Master's awards, at least 70 out of 100 for the dissertation. Faculties retain discretion to increase these thresholds.
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Award with Merit	at least 60 out of 100 for the taught component overall and, for masters awards, at least 60 out of 100 for the dissertation. Faculties retain discretion to increase these thresholds.
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Pass	at least 50 out of 100 for the taught component overall and, for Master's awards, at least 50 out of 100 for the dissertation.
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Fail 49 or below out of 100 for the taught component overall or, where relevant, 49 or below out of 100 for the dissertation.

### **Exceptions**

i. The classification of the award for programmes using the 5-point (A-E) scale (all taught Masters programmes in the Graduate School of Education) should be reached by using a fixed mid-point for each grade where A = 75, B = 65 and C = 55. The same boundaries as in 34.4 will apply.

ii. The classification of the award in the MA in Law is, as follows:

*For the award of a Distinction: not less than an overall mark of 65 out of 100 with a mark of not less than 70 in **150** of 240 credit points.*

*For the award of a Merit: not less than an overall mark of 60 out of 100 with a mark of not less than 60 out of 100 in **150** of 240 credit points.*

## **35 Awards: Non-modular Programmes**

35.1 This section applies to all newly registered students on the non-modular professional programmes of MB,ChB and BVSc at the University of Bristol from the 2011-12 academic year and supersedes all previous regulations and standing orders.

This section applies to all **new and currently** registered students on the BDS programme from the 2013-14 academic year and supersedes all previous regulations and standing orders.

Students on the MB,ChB and BVSc programmes who registered before 2011-2012 will continue to be governed by the regulations that were in place in the academic year 2010-11, for the duration of their programme of study, unless they re-sit a year (and thereby join a cohort governed by the new rules, in which case they too will be subject to the new rules) or a current cohort of students consents to the new rules being applied, so long as this would not disadvantage any student.

35.2 The final programme mark is calculated by averaging the weighted individual unit marks. The result of the calculation of both the overall average mark achieved for the year and the final programme mark should be recorded to one decimal point.

35.3 If there is evidence that the performance of a student at the time of examination is likely to have been affected by extenuating circumstances, section 27 'extenuating circumstances', applies.

35.4 Requirements which are inherent to the design of the programme, such as the requirement for the student to pass a particular assessment or component in order to graduate, must be described in the relevant programme specification, and be implemented before these rules are applied.

35.5 The marks gained in all units within the approved programme structure that are undertaken by the student will contribute to the final programme mark. Where students are given exemption from units of the programme due to accredited prior learning, including from other higher education institutions, marks previously gained for any such units will not contribute to the calculation of the final programme mark.

35.6 Unit marks will be weighted for any calculation of the year and the final programme mark, as described in the relevant programme specification / student handbook. Students must be informed of any weighting in advance of commencement of the year of study.

35.7 Assessments which only test competencies on a pass/fail basis will not contribute to the unit mark and therefore will also not contribute to the year mark or the final programme mark.

35.8 The award of a degree in the non-modular professional programmes is determined by the final programme mark, as follows:

Pass	50 and above
Fail	49 and below

35.9 The classification of a degree is determined by the final programme mark in relation to the overall performance in the cohort, as follows<sup>6</sup>:

- The top 10% of the student cohort on the programme will be awarded a degree with distinction;
- The next 15% of the student cohort on the programme will be awarded a degree with merit;
- All other students that have a final programme mark of 50 out of 100 or more will be awarded a professional degree. The rank of the remainder of students may be published, at the discretion of the relevant faculty Board of Examiners.

35.10 Where programmes decide to award distinctions or merits for individual units, the same method provided in 35.9 will apply.

35.11 No further rules will apply for the calculation of the final programme mark and the award of a degree with merit and distinction following application of these rules.

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Approved by Senate, May 2008

Amendments for 2009-10: approved by Senate, 15 June 2009 and under vacation powers, August 2009.

Amendments for 2010-11: approved by Senate, May and June 2010

Amendments for 2011-12: approved by Senate, December 2010, May and June 2011 and under vacation powers, August 2011.

Amendments for 2012-13, approved by Senate, February, May and June 2012 and under vacation powers, August 2011.

Amendments for 2013-14, approved by Senate, May and June 2013.

Amendments for 2014-15, approved by Senate, June 2014.

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<sup>6</sup> The professional programmes determine student performance primarily on the attainment of a threshold of competence. For this reason these degrees are not classified. However potential employers require the university to recognise excellence and the simplest, most transparent and justifiable approach is by ranking within a cohort of students. All three programmes have sufficient students each year to minimise the risk of students being disadvantaged by any year effect.



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## Annex 1

### GLOSSARY and DEFINITION OF TERMS - STANDARD TERMINOLOGY

Academic session	The University's teaching year, made up of two teaching blocks, running from late September to mid-June the following year. For most postgraduate Master's degree students, the period of study extends throughout the summer vacation.
Academic Personal Tutor	A member of academic staff in the student's school who is his/her first point of contact for any personal or academic problems.
Accreditation of prior learning	See <i>Recognition of Prior Learning</i> .
Anonymous marking	A process whereby, to ensure impartiality, the identity of students is not revealed to those marking their examination scripts or to the Board of Examiners.
Assessment	A generic term for processes that measure students' learning, skills and understanding. Assessment can be <i>formative or summative</i> .
<i>Formative assessment</i>	Assessment designed to provide feedback to students on their progress towards meeting stated learning objectives/outcomes.
<i>Summative assessment</i>	Assessment designed to provide a clear statement of achievement or failure in relation to stated learning objectives/outcomes
Assignment	A piece of coursework (e.g. project or essay) to be completed by a student.
Credit points	Credit points denote the notional amount of time (formal classes plus private study) to be allocated to that unit of teaching. Credit points are awarded to a learner in recognition of the verified achievement of designated learning outcomes at a specified level.
Credit transfer	A mechanism which allows credit awarded for a higher education (HE) awarding body to be recognised, quantified and included towards the credit requirements for a programmes delivered by another HE provider.
Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS)	A system which enables learners to accumulate credit and which facilitates the transfer of that credit within and between education providers.
Compensation	The award of credit to a student to permit progression, despite failure to achieve a pass mark associated with a taught unit(s) at the first attempt, on the basis of specified criteria.
Competence standard	The academic, medical or other standard(s) applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a student has a particular level of competence or ability.
Co-requisite	A requirement that certain units must be studied together, either at the same time or in sequence.
Dissertation	A member of the academic staff assigned to a taught postgraduate student undertaking a dissertation to provide academic guidance and personal support.
Double marking	A process whereby student work is independently assessed by



more than one marker.

Extenuating circumstance	Reasons external to study (such as illness, an accident or personal or family problems) put forward by a student to explain absence or a negative impact on their performance in assessment. Such circumstances and their effect on performance will be considered by a Board of Examiners when it makes decisions on progression, completion or classification.
Extension of period of study	Taught postgraduate students may apply for an extension where circumstances necessitate an extension to the normal period of study in order to complete a dissertation or equivalent.
Intercalation	The circumstance in which a student takes up the opportunity to pause his or her study on a registered programme to study for a degree in a different programme of study. The student resumes, as normal, on their registered programme following the period of intercalation.
Learning outcomes	Statement of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning.
Levels of study	<p>There are five defined levels of study within undergraduate programmes. All programmes are awarded at one of these levels as defined in the University's credit framework. Minimum credit points required at each level are also defined in the framework. The levels are:</p> <p><u>NQF</u> level 3 (generally called level 0) Level <u>4</u> (Certificate) Level <u>5</u> (Intermediate) Level <u>6</u> (Honours) Level <u>7</u> (Masters)</p>
Mark	A mark is the numerical value by which a Board of Examiners assesses the performance of a student. Such a mark is normally on a scale linked to the specified criteria.
Marking criteria	The learning outcome knowledge, understanding and skills requirements that are taken into account in awarding assessment marks.
Marking scheme	A detailed structure for assigning marks where a specific number of marks are given to individual components of the answer.
Model answer	The examiner's perception of what an answer should be, made available to the external examiner.
Moderation	<p>A quality assurance process whereby the marks are reviewed, to ensure that the individual marks awarded are appropriate in terms of consistency, fairness and rigour in the assessment. Methods of moderation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sampling, either by an external examiner or by an internal second marker;</li><li>• Additional marking of borderlines, firsts and fails;</li><li>• Additional marking where there is significant disparity between the different elements of assessment for an individual student,</li></ul>

in a unit or across the programme;

- Additional marking where there is significant disparity between the marks of different markers in a particular unit or programme.

Must-pass unit	A unit for which a student must obtain the credit points by achieving the pass mark and any additional criteria (i.e. it cannot be compensated). A unit may be deemed 'must-pass' by the faculty either for entry onto a subsequent unit(s) or because it is determined to be an integral part of the programme for pedagogic or for professional accreditation reasons.
Negative Marking	Sometimes used in multiple choice or extended matching index assessments, where marks are deducted from the overall score for a wrong answer. Negative marking is designed to discourage students from guessing when they do not know the answer to the question.
Norm-Referencing	Norm-referenced assessment is the process of allocating students' marks according to a fixed distribution of bands of achievement which is determined by the performance of the cohort overall.
Notional hours of learning	The number of hours which it is expected that a learner (at a particular level) will spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes at that level.
Open unit	A unit that is outside of the student's subject discipline which a student can take (i.e. not have any pre- or co-requisites), subject to space and timetabling constraints, normally at level 4.
Penalty	Action taken when a student does not comply with University regulations, which has a consequence for the student.
Plagiarism	The unacknowledged inclusion in a piece of work of material derived from the published or unpublished work of another, whether intentional or unintentional. This includes material obtained from the internet. Students submitting work for assessment must acknowledge all sources of information correctly and confirm that the work is his/her work alone. Proven cases of plagiarism attract a range of penalties which are detailed in the University Examination Regulations.
Policy	A common University statement / expectation established by common consensus that will be followed, unless there is good and validated reason otherwise.
Pre-requisite	A requirement which must be satisfied as a condition of entry to a programme or unit.
Programme	A formal structured course of study over one or more academic years during which a number of units in a subject discipline or group of disciplines are taken leading to an award. The structure of each taught programme is available in the Programme Catalogue: <a href="https://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/unitprogcat/AboutProgrammes.jsa">https://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/unitprogcat/AboutProgrammes.jsa</a>
Progression	All students are required to make satisfactory academic progress before being allowed to progress to the next year of study (undergraduate degree programmes) or to the dissertation stage (most postgraduate Master's programmes). Students on taught programmes are required to achieve a certain level of attainment, and to have

acquired a certain number of credit points, as laid down in the regulations, in order to progress.

QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	A process whereby students can be exempt from some parts of their chosen programme of study by recognition of previous learning. This may be either certificated learning or prior experiential learning where learning achieved outside education or training systems is assessed and recognised for academic purposes.
Regulation	A rule set by the University which must be followed.
Re-sit	A re-assessment that is taken because of failure to achieve the required standard in summative examinations.
Required to withdraw	Students on taught programmes who fail to make adequate progress with their academic work, or who repeatedly fail to attend scheduled classes without providing an acceptable explanation, may be asked to leave the University.
Results	The term 'results' covers the range of formulations currently used in the University to reflect the outcome of examinations.
Sampling	see Moderation
Scaling	The systematic adjustment of a set of marks (applied to the marks of the whole cohort), according to a scale, in order to ensure that they properly reflect the achievements of the students concerned as defined by the assessment criteria.
Second marking	see Double marking
Supplementary assessment	An assessment that is taken without penalty (i.e. "as if for the first time") because of validated extenuating circumstances.
Supplementary year	An additional year of study within a programme that provides eligible students the opportunity to meet the criteria for progression whereas otherwise they are not able to progress to the next year or component of study.
Suspension of studies	A formal introduction of a pause in a student's studies during which they are not required to engage with their studies.
Teaching block	A teaching period of 12-weeks, followed by an assessment period.
Unit	Units (or modules) are the building blocks of all taught programmes. A unit may be mandatory or optional and must be capable of being separately assessed.  <i>Mandatory unit</i> – A core unit on a programme which must be studied by a student.  <i>Optional unit</i> – A unit chosen by a student from a specified list of units available on a particular programme.
Withdrawal	Students who, for academic or personal reasons, wish to leave the University before completing their programme of study

## Annex 2

### Dates for Implementing New University Regulation / Policy

1. The introduction of the new regulations for calculating the final programme mark and degree classification in modular undergraduate programmes (section 33), which commenced in 2010/11, has been phased in and now applies to all students from the 2014/15 academic year.
2. For calculating the final programme mark and the award of a Merit or Distinction in non-modular professional programmes (BVSc, MBChB) (section 35)\*:

Academic Year	Year of Study				
	1	2	3	4	5
2014-15	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	OLD
2015-16	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW

3. The introduction of the new regulations for determining the progression and completion of students in undergraduate modular programmes (section 30), which commenced in 2011/12, has been phased in and now applies to all students from the 2014/15 academic year.
4. For determining the progression and completion of students on the non-modular professional programmes (BVSc, MBChB) (section 32)\*:

Academic Year	Year of Study				
	1	2	3	4	5
2014-15	NEW	NEW	NEW	OLD	OLD
2015-16	NEW	NEW	NEW	NEW	OLD

\* The new regulations apply to all new and currently registered students on the BDS programme from the 2013-14 academic year.

## **Regulations for Specific Programmes**

The regulations in the Code have primacy over these regulations, should there be a conflict in policy, with regard to students newly registered on the following programmes: MBChB, BDS, BVSc, Diploma in Dental Hygiene, Diploma in Dental Therapy, Postgraduate Certificate in Education, Graduate Diploma and MSc in Social Work.

### **REGULATIONS FOR THE CONJOINED DEGREES OF MBCHB**

1. For the purpose of these regulations 'the University' shall include those hospitals and outreach practices that the University may use regularly or occasionally.

#### **Admission to the MBChB Programme**

2. To be eligible for admission to the MBChB programme, candidates shall have such qualifications as the Board of Medicine and Dentistry shall determine. To be eligible for admission to the graduate MBChB programme, candidates shall have obtained an honours degree (class 2.1 or better) in one of the medical sciences (e.g. Physiology, Pharmacology, Pathology) or professional degrees allied to medicine (e.g. dentistry, pharmacy, physiotherapy).

#### **Programme Structure**

3. The standard curriculum of the MBChB programme shall extend over not less than five years from the commencement of professional study in the University or other institution approved for that purpose by the University. The graduate MBChB programme shall extend over not less than four years from the commencement of professional study in the University or other institution approved for that purpose by the University. The next year shall not normally be entered upon until that which precedes it has been successfully completed.

4. The curricula will be divided into five years, (4 years for the graduate MBChB programme) each of which will comprise a number of units or elements as shall be determined by the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. Students will be admitted to units or elements only at the beginning of those units or elements. Students must attend the units or elements in the prescribed order and in the years of the curriculum in which they are scheduled. Students may not take courses elsewhere in place of units or elements provided unless approved by the University.

#### **The MBChB examinations**

5. The examination in each year shall comprise a range of assessments, and shall cover those units or elements studied during the year. The Board of Examiners shall determine whether a candidate has satisfactorily completed a unit or element for the purpose of proceeding to the next year of the curriculum.

6. The failure of any student to show satisfactory progress in a unit or element of the MBChB programme or to attend regularly any prescribed activity (including such lectures, discussion periods, tutorial and practical classes, clinical commitments, as may be required) or to undertake prescribed written or other work or to attend any examination or to reach a satisfactory standard in any terminal, sessional or degree examination, or any part or parts thereof, shall be reported to the Examination Board of the Faculty which may, at its discretion, require the student concerned to repeat a unit/s or element/s or to re-sit an examination/s or to withdraw from the MBChB programme. The exact requirements for progression from year to year of a student newly registered from the 2012/13 academic year are provided in the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes and in the Standing Orders for the programme.

7. The requirements for the progression of a student registered **before 2012-13** are:

*Candidates shall be required to pass in all subjects of an examination at the same time, except that a candidate who is taking the examination for the first time and who satisfies the examiners in one or more subjects may, at the discretion of the relevant Board of Examiners, be permitted a further attempt, at the next examination only, in the subject(s) failed.*

*A student, on the standard MBChB programme, whose performance is unsatisfactory in Year 3 or 4 may, at the discretion of the relevant Board of Examiners, be allowed to progress to Year 4 or 5 of the programme on the understanding that the deficit must at the first opportunity be made good in order to meet the requirements of the degree.*

### **The Degree of BSc**

8. The unclassified degree of Bachelor of Science in the Science of Medicine may be awarded at the discretion of the relevant Board of Examiners. The BSc will only be obtainable by a student registered for the MBChB programme who has passed the year 3 written examination, but who chooses to leave or is required to leave the programme after this point.

### **Certificate and Diploma of Higher Education**

9. A candidate who has satisfactorily completed year 1 of the standard MB ChB Degree, but who either does not proceed or does not complete year 2 satisfactorily, may be awarded the Certificate of Higher Education. Similarly, a candidate who has completed year 2 of the standard MB ChB degree satisfactorily, but who either does not proceed or does not complete year 3 satisfactorily, may be awarded the Diploma of Higher Education.

### **Degree with Distinction or Merit**

10. The degree classification of a student shall be awarded in accordance with the regulations set out in the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes.

### **Distinctions and Merits in Units**

11. Distinctions or Merits may be awarded in accordance with University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes.

## **REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF DENTAL SURGERY (BDS)**

1. For the purpose of these regulations 'the University' shall include those hospitals and outreach practices that the University may use regularly or occasionally.

### **Programme Structure**

2. The curriculum of the BDS programme shall extend over not less than five years from the commencement of professional study in the University or other institution approved for that purpose by the University. The next year shall not normally be entered upon until that which precedes it has been successfully completed.

3. The curriculum will be divided into 5 years each of which will comprise a number of units or elements as shall be determined by the Board of the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry. Students will be admitted to units or elements only at the beginning of those units or elements. Students must attend the units or elements in the prescribed order and in the years of the curriculum in which they are scheduled. Students may not take courses elsewhere in place of units or elements provided unless approved by the University.

### **BDS examinations**

4. The examination in each year will comprise a range of assessments, and shall cover those units or elements studied during the year. The Board of Examiners will determine whether a candidate has satisfactorily completed a unit or element for the purpose of proceeding to the next year of the curriculum.

5. The failure of any student to show satisfactory progress in a unit or element of the BDS programme or to attend regularly any prescribed activity (including such lectures, discussion periods, tutorial and practical classes, clinical commitments, as may be required) or to undertake prescribed written or other work or to attend any examination or to reach a satisfactory standard in any terminal, sessional or degree examination, or any part or parts thereof, shall be reported to the Board of the Faculty which may, if it thinks fit, require the student concerned to repeat a unit or element or to re-sit an examination or to withdraw from the BDS programme. The exact requirements for progression from year to year are provided in the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes and in the Standing Orders for the programme.

### **Degree with Distinction or Merit**

6. The degree classification of a student shall be awarded in accordance with the regulations set out in the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes.

### **The Degree of BSc**

7. The unclassified degree of Bachelor of Science in the Science of Dentistry may be awarded at the discretion of the Faculty Board. The BSc will only be obtainable by a student registered for the BDS programme who has passed year 1, year 2 and year 3, but who chooses to leave or is required to leave the programme after this point.

### **Certificate and Diploma of Higher Education**

8. A candidate who has satisfactorily completed year 1 of the BDS Degree, but who either does not proceed or does not complete year 2 satisfactorily, may be awarded the Certificate of Higher Education. Similarly, a candidate who has completed year 2 of the BDS degree satisfactorily, but who either does not proceed nor does not complete year 3 satisfactorily, may be awarded the Diploma of Higher Education.

## **REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF BVSC**

1. All practical classes shall be compulsory; failure to attend will necessitate the student undertaking additional work specified by the unit organiser. The failure of any student to show satisfactory progress in a unit of study or to attend regularly any prescribed teaching session (including such lectures, directed self-education (DSE), clinical commitments, field work and vacation units as may be required) or to undertake prescribed written or other work or to present himself or herself for any assessment or to reach a satisfactory standard in any assessment, shall be reported to the Faculty Undergraduate Studies Committee, which may, if it thinks fit, require the student concerned to repeat a unit, to complete any additional coursework, to sit an examination or to withdraw from the programme. The exact requirements for progression from year to year on the BVSc is provided in the University Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes and in the Standing Orders for the programme.

2. The assessment for units that contribute formally to the curriculum for the degree of BVSc may comprise several components, and which may include a mid-session examination, directed self-education assessment and a final examination, together with practical or other assessments. Students shall be informed at the start of any academic year of the assessments they will be required to undertake in that year and the distribution of marks between the assessments and any components that are 'must pass'.

3. The curriculum shall be divided into five parts, and shall extend over not less than five years from the commencement of study in the University or other institution approved for that purpose by the University. Information on the programme structure and its units are provided in the University's Programme Catalogue.

### **Extramural Studies**

4.1. Before entering the third year of the programme a candidate must normally produce satisfactory evidence that he or she has received extramural experience in accordance with arrangements approved by the Veterinary Programme Committee for a total period of not less than twelve weeks.

4.2 Before presenting himself or herself for the final examination a candidate must normally produce satisfactory evidence that he or she has received extramural experience in accordance with arrangements approved by the Veterinary Programme Committee, for a total period of not less than twenty-six weeks.

### **Degree with Distinction or Merit**

5.1. A student graduating in 2015-16 or before shall be awarded the degree of BVSc with distinction if he or she: gains a 'high average mark', as defined in the programme's standing orders, in examinations contributing to the BVSc degree programme and gains a 'minimum mark', as defined in the programme's standing orders, above the pass mark in these examinations (subject to concessions on grounds of illness); does not fail any unit during the course of the programme (subject to concession on grounds of extenuating circumstances) and has been awarded at least one distinction ( $\geq 75$  per cent) in individual unit assessments at any stage of the programme.

5.2 The degree classification of a student graduating in or after 2016-17 shall be awarded in accordance with the regulations set out in the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes.

### **Degree of BSc**

6. The unclassified degree of Bachelor of Science (Veterinary Science) may be awarded at the discretion of the Board of the Faculty of Medical and Veterinary Sciences. The BSc will be obtainable by a student registered for the BVSc programme who has passed the third



year of the BVSc but who chooses to leave or is required to leave or who is unable to complete the programme after this point.

### **Certificate and Diploma of Higher Education**

7. A candidate who has completed satisfactorily Year 1 of the Degree, but who either does not proceed or does not complete satisfactorily Year 2, may be awarded the Certificate of Higher Education. Similarly, a candidate who has completed satisfactorily Year 2, but who either does not proceed or does not complete satisfactorily Year 3, may be awarded the Diploma of Higher Education.

## **REGULATIONS FOR THE DIPLOMA IN DENTAL THERAPY**

1. The programme shall extend over not less than 1 year of full-time study under the direction of the School of Professionals Complementary to Dentistry.
2. Candidates for the Diploma must at the time of entry upon the course have satisfied the Programme Director as to their suitability for the programme of study.
3. The failure of any student to attend regularly at classes and to submit prescribed work may lead to the student being required to withdraw from the programme. A student whose work during the first year fails to reach satisfactory standard may be refused admission to the second year of the programme.
4. The Diploma shall be awarded to candidates who satisfy the examiners in written examinations and in assessment of work produced throughout the period of the programme.
5. The Examination Regulations shall form part of these regulations.

## **REGULATIONS FOR THE DIPLOMA IN DENTAL HYGIENE**

The Diploma in Dental Hygiene ('the Diploma') will be subject to the General Regulations within the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes except in the case of the specific regulations below:

1. In addition to those approved by Senate, to be eligible for admissions to the programme of study candidates must have obtained entrance qualifications acceptable to the General Dental Council.
2. To be eligible for the award the Diploma students must successfully gain 240 credits with at least 80 at Level I (Intermediate). A total of 240 credit points must be achieved in order for candidates to be awarded the Diploma in Dental Hygiene.
3. The Diploma in Dental Hygiene may be awarded with Distinction to candidates of special merit. These candidates must obtain a minimum of 65% in their end of first year examination and 75% or above in their final examination.
4. Candidates who leave the programme before sitting the final Diploma and have gained 120 credit points from modules passed will be awarded a Certificate in Higher Education in Dentistry.
5. The normal length of the programme will be 21 months of full time study or equivalent. The maximum length of enrolment for the award is 39 months.
6. Candidates who fail to satisfy the examiners in a key unit of assessment shall be permitted to re-present the failed work or to present themselves for re-examination on one further occasion only at one time specified by the examiners. Key units are defined as the end of first year examination and the Project module.
7. Candidates may not proceed to the second year of study carrying a fail mark in any key unit. Candidates must pass specified units before proceeding to other specified units; as specified in the programme specification.
8. The Examination Regulations shall form part of these regulations.

## POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN EDUCATION

### 1. General

- 1.1 The Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes (referred to throughout these Regulations as "the Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.
- 1.2 Candidates for the programme will be issued with a programme handbook, and are bound by the contents of the handbook in addition to these Regulations. Handbooks contain detailed information on the expectations placed upon candidates. Handbooks addressing the experience of the individual candidate will be produced by the University. These may differ for candidates studying for the same award but undertaking placements in different professional environments. This is due to the variety of environments and regulatory structures under which Initial Teacher Education may now take place (via. Academies and associated chains/federations; Free Schools; TeachFirst School Partners; Local Authority Schools; School Direct Partner Schools; and Independent Schools or any other structures as appropriate).
- 1.3 Successful completion of the programme will lead to recommendation for Qualified Teacher Status, based on successful completion of both the programme and other requirements as set by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (or any future successor to this agency).

### 2. Conditions for Admission

- 2.1 A candidate for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education shall hold a qualification deemed by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (or any future successor to this agency) to entitle a qualified teacher to be classified as a graduate for salary purposes, or shall have qualifications or experience deemed equivalent to the above. In addition a candidate shall, at the time of admission to the programme, normally hold a GCSE at Grade C or above, or its equivalent (for applicants from outside the UK), in both English and Mathematics and have passed the National College for Teaching and Leadership Numeracy and Literacy Skills Tests (or any future successor assessments).

### 3. Application

- 3.1 Application for admission is made through one of three routes:
  - a) *either* through the GTTR (Graduate Teacher Training Registry, or any other agreed future successor process) at any time during the period October to August preceding commencement of study. Candidates registering *via* this route will be known as "*Student Teachers*";
  - b) *or* normally through the GTTR application route for School Direct allocated places (or any agreed future successor process). Candidates registering via this route will be known as "*Student Teachers*";
  - c) *or* through participation in a TeachFirst Assessment Centre (or any agreed future successor process operated by the University under contract from the national teaching charity "TeachFirst"). Candidates registering via this route will be known as "*TeachFirst Participants*".

Recruitment will close when each subject is deemed full by the Head of School.

- 3.2 The University of Bristol upholds legal responsibility for determining academic, medical and professional suitability for all candidates permitted to register on its programmes.

#### **4. Progression**

- 4.1 In cases of failure in a unit, any piece of assessed work may be resubmitted once only. The resubmitted piece of work will receive a capped mark.
- 4.2 *Student Teachers* may undertake a repeat school placement once only, subject to a two year time limit. The two year time limit is counted from the date of the Board of Examiners.
- 4.3 *TeachFirst Participants* may not undertake a repeat school placement.
- 4.4 In addition to the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes , a candidate who is absent from any part of the programme for 10 days or more will be referred to the Board of Examiners and may be required to complete additional time or other requirements.
- 4.5 A candidate who, without good cause, fails to take up a school placement offered to him or her or who withdraws from a school placement will be deemed by the Board of Examiners to have withdrawn from the entire programme.
- 4.6 A candidate who is required to withdraw from a school placement by the regulating authority for that placement will be deemed to have failed practical teaching by the Board of Examiners.
- 4.7 If a *Student Teacher's* placement is withdrawn or they are required to undertake a repeat placement the University will approach a maximum of three schools within the two year time limit to secure a placement. If, after approaching three schools, the University is unable to secure a placement the candidate will be required to withdraw from the entire programme by the Board of Examiners.
- 4.8 A candidate whose continuance on the programme causes serious concerns may be referred under the Procedure for Termination for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education.

#### **5. Assessment and Awards**

- 5.1 A candidate who is deemed by the Board of Examiners to have passed all level 6 and level 7 requirements of the programme will be awarded the Postgraduate Certificate of Education (in specialty subject) with 60 level 7 credits, and with Qualified Teacher Status.
- 5.2 A candidate who is deemed by the Board of Examiners to have passed all level 6 requirements of the programme, but not all level 7 requirements of the programme will instead be awarded the Professional Certificate of Education (in specialty subject), with Qualified Teacher Status.
- 5.3 A candidate who has not met the requirements of the programme will be deemed by the Board of Examiners to have failed.
- 5.4 As a consequence of failure, the Board of Examiners may require the candidate to re-sit or withdraw, as outlined in section 4 (above) as deemed appropriate.
- 5.5 Candidates meeting the requirements of either 5.1 or 5.2 (above) will be eligible for the award to be made with a passing classification.
- 5.6 Candidates meeting the requirement in 5.1 (above) may additionally be eligible for the award to be made with a classification of distinction or merit.
  - a) Classification will be derived from achievement in level 7 units associated with the programme only, using a fixed-point scale.

- b) Candidates with an overall grade profile of AAB or better may be eligible for the award with the classification of distinction.
- c) Candidates with an overall grade profile below AAB, and above BBB, and who have not been required to re-sit any module, may be eligible for the award with the classification of merit.

## **Graduate Diploma**

### *Qualification for Entry*

1. Candidates for the Graduate Diploma shall be holders of a degree (or other appropriate qualification) of any university (or other comparable institution) approved by the relevant Faculty Board.

### *Programme Requirements*

2. The qualification for the award of the Graduate Diploma shall be the pursuance of a curriculum consisting of 120 credit points with at least 80 at level 6.

### *Period of Study*

3. The period of study for the degree will be not less than one year of full time study or two years of part-time study, where permitted.

### *Assessment*

4. The pass mark for the Graduate Diploma is 50 out of 100.
5. For the Graduate Diploma in Economics, re-sit exams are not available, however, the relevant Board of Examiners will award credit to a student, despite failure to achieve a pass mark associated with taught unit(s) at the first attempt (i.e. a 'compensated pass'), provided conditions (a)-(d) are satisfied.
  - a) The total of the units failed in the year of study does not exceed 20 credit points.
  - b) The relevant unit mark is within 45-49 out of 100 at the first attempt.
  - c) The student fulfils all other requirements for the award of credit, as stated in the programme and/or unit specification, such as:
    - completion of practical work, e.g. field courses, laboratory sessions, language tuition, etc, deemed essential to understanding the academic discipline the student is studying;
    - a combination of coursework and practical work, supplemented by a record of attendance at teaching sessions, e.g. tutorials or laboratory sessions;
    - the acquisition of professional skills and attributes required in disciplines such as education, the health professions or the performing arts.
  - d) The student satisfactorily completes any additional work deemed necessary, as determined by the relevant Board of Examiners, so as to enable the student to achieve the learning outcomes in the assessment(s) that they had failed.

### *Award*

6. The Graduate Diploma may be awarded with distinction where a student receives at least an average mark of 70 and where all units have been passed at the first attempt.
7. The Graduate Diploma may be awarded in subjects approved by Senate. The subjects available at present are:
  - Economics
  - Social Work with Children and Young People (post qualifying award in specialist social work)
  - Professional Practice with Children and Young People

## **THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SOCIAL WORK**

1. The Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes (referred to throughout these Regulations as "the Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

### **Admission**

2. Application for admission to the degree of MSc in Social Work shall be subject to section 7 of the Code, and the relevant admissions statement.

### **Curriculum**

3. The curriculum for the degree shall extend over a period of not less than two academic years and shall consist of lectures, seminars, placements, fieldwork and training periods as specified by the school. The curriculum aims to develop candidates' practical, theoretical and applied social work skills and knowledge in line with professional requirements.

### **Progression and Examination**

4. Students will normally be required to have gained 120 credit points in order to progress from year 1 to year 2.
5. The degree of Master of Science in Social Work shall be awarded to a candidate who satisfies the examiners in the following areas:
  - (a) satisfactory completion of prescribed work for the taught curriculum;
  - (b) satisfactory completion of social work practice placements;
  - (c) satisfactory completion of the dissertation. A candidate may be examined orally on the subject of the dissertation. The Registrar shall give at least 10 days' notice to any candidate who may be required to attend an oral examination; and
  - (d) obtains a total of 320 credits at level 7 for the degree of Master of Science including 260 credits for the taught /practice learning component and 60 credits for the dissertation.

### **Assessment of Practice**

6. The school will establish a Practice Assessment Panel with the following responsibilities:
  - (a) monitoring the assessment of students' practice, and making recommendations to the School Board of Examiners in individual cases where special circumstances have occurred;
  - (b) monitoring the quality of placement provision.

Composition and terms of reference of the Panel will be determined by the school, and it will normally include a balanced representation of practice educators and university staff.

### **Award of Postgraduate Diploma**

7. A candidate who has failed to satisfy the examiners in the dissertation or who exceptionally chooses not to proceed to the dissertation may be recommended for the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work subject to the following conditions:

In the case of the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work, candidates must obtain 260 credits in total through successful completion of all the taught and practice learning components of the programme.

### **Award of MSc in Social Work with Merit or Distinction**

8. **In addition** to the final programme marks thresholds specified in the Code, regarding the award of Merit or Distinction, the following condition will apply to the MSc in Social Work.

*To be granted the award with Merit or Distinction, candidates for the MSc in Social Work must normally pass **both** practice placements **at the first attempt**. Exceptions to this rule will normally be made only where the failure to achieve the necessary standard was demonstrably outside the control of the student concerned. Where appropriate, the school's Practice Assessment Panel may act as an Extenuating Circumstances Committee to consider such cases and make recommendations to the Examinations Board.*

### **Award of qualification in Social Welfare Studies**

9. Students who satisfy the academic requirements and achieve 60, 120, or 180 credit points, but who:

- (a) fail the practice learning components or are otherwise deemed unsuitable for professional social work, or
  - (b) choose not to proceed to the postgraduate Diploma or MSc in Social Work,
- will be eligible respectively for the award of Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or Master of Science in Social Welfare Studies.

### **Procedure for termination**

10. A candidate whose continuance on the programme causes serious concerns in terms of academic or placement work may be required under the Procedure for Termination to withdraw from the programme.



## **Principles for Designing and Providing Distance Learning<sup>7</sup> at the University of Bristol**

Faculties and Schools must consider and fulfil the following principles in the design and delivery of programmes by distance learning, whether as part of a programme or the whole programme.

### **1. Market Research**

Appropriate market research should be undertaken in order to ensure that a similar programme does not already exist elsewhere and to identify the student market. Potential distance learning students may be from different cultures and backgrounds with different qualifications and educational needs and these must be considered when the level, form and content of the curriculum is determined. Consultation with any relevant professional bodies would also be considered good practice.

### **2. Business Planning - Costing the programme.**

Programmes containing distance learning should be fully costed at the design stage, to be sure that the programme is sustainable. It is important that the cost drivers are well understood and incorporated into any planning process, acknowledging that the costs of distance learning programme are inherently different to campus-based programmes. Distance learning can be an efficient use of resources; upfront investment to establish the materials / content and the underlying support structures can result in savings once the programme is established, although experiences in other institutions have shown that it should not be perceived as a significant source of income. Proposals for distance learning need to show how the initial investment will be recouped and how the ongoing maintenance will be covered in relation to planned student numbers (i.e. sustainability).

Plans should address:

- the start up costs required to develop the materials/resources (including academic time) for distance learning, and how these costs will be recouped, in relation to student numbers;
- the ongoing costs of the maintenance of distance learning material/resources;
- the ongoing administration costs of the programme in relation to the planned student numbers (acknowledging that a successful distance learning programme will normally incur significant additional administration compared to those taught exclusively on campus).
- It is also important to establish the tuition fee structure for distance learning programmes, and whether potential students are likely to be HEFCE, self or employer-funded.

Standards should be established by which the success/value of a distance learning programme is measured and monitored.

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<sup>7</sup> *Distance learning is defined as an educational provision leading to an award, or to specific credit toward an award, of an awarding institution delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through means which generally do not require the student to attend particular classes or events at particular times and particular locations.” (QAA Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 2: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning).*

It is recommended that all proposals for a new programme containing distance learning include a 'pilot' stage.

There will also be costs incurred in providing an appropriate level of academic and pastoral tutor support and this should be mentioned explicitly.

The ongoing delivery and support for a distance learning programme, once established, could be out-sourced, but external tutors still need to be paid, trained, recruited and managed. Alternatively, strategic international partners may be identified to support or even provide specific learning resources (e.g. laboratory space, regional support and examination venues). Although the delivery of the academic content and the support / administrative structures may be provided in partnership with other providers, the lack of exact complementarity of structures between institutions will inevitably result in additional complexities that do need to be resolved before embarking on the programme.

All these factors must be considered in the business plan for the programme.

### **3. Management Structure**

A management structure for the programme should be clearly defined with responsibilities attributed appropriately. A programme board may be established for this purpose. It is essential that the management structure for distance learning programmes is well organised, integrated, and consistent, and all those contributing to it know their responsibilities. No aspect of delivering the programme should rely solely on one person. There are implications for the whole student cycle, not just the teaching with a distance learning programme. This puts a premium on the effective and efficient administration of the programme so a successful distance learning programme will necessitate extra administration, whether this is at School or Faculty level, or a combination both.

### **4. Student Support Structures**

A specific structure should be established to administer and support 'distance learning' students, who will have different needs than those who are taught exclusively on campus. Students should be made fully aware of their programme of study, how it will be delivered/assessed and a clear schedule for the delivery/assessment. Similarly students should be made aware of the academic expectations on them, as set out in the programme specification. Students should be informed how they may access the support services, including the library, pastoral and academic support.

### **5. Partnerships**

Any collaborative arrangements for distance learning should be negotiated, agreed and managed in accordance with the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Educational Partnerships.

### **6. The Technology**

It is the pedagogy, rather than the technology for delivering the content, that drives distance learning, but the technology must also map onto centrally-supported software, with an eye on scalability to accommodate increases in student numbers.

The technology for the delivery of distance learning, for receipt of work and conducting on-line assessment must also be robust, secure and reliable, and must be tested before use. Contingency plans must in place in the event of any failure of the technology. The technology employed in distance learning must be centrally supported and be accessible to all the proposed users.

## **7. Quality Assurance and Approval Processes**

All new proposals for distance learning should be presented and considered in accordance with the agreed procedure for new programmes, including consultation with relevant professional services such as the Library and the Student Systems Information Office. The proposal must be agreed by the School and Faculty before being presented for approval.

Distance learning programmes should conform to the University's internal quality assurance mechanisms and the University's regulations. A sub-set of regulations for such programmes may need to be developed where this is not possible.

## **8. Curriculum Design and Delivery**

It is acknowledged that the delivery of teaching via distance learning will vary by subject, depending on the form of teaching and content that is to be delivered. The following points should be followed wherever possible:

- a) programme teams should consider how the curriculum is delivered, whether in a blended format or entirely away from campus. Teams should consider whether students should be required to attend the University for an induction session and/or other taught components as a mandatory part of the programme,
- b) programme teams should consider how the learning outcomes from each unit, and those of the programme, should be assessed. Consideration should also be given to whether the forms of assessment can be conducted online (this will require that assurance can be provided that the assessment is completed by the student) or whether students will need to attend the University or another designated venue to take summative assessments;
- c) students should receive feedback on their formative assessment, in accordance with University policy, in good time to influence the next relevant activity or assessment, as set out in the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes,
- d) the programme specification should make clear to students the academic, pastoral and other support that is available to them in the School/Faculty, including outlining the appropriate forms and lines of communication and expected timeframe for responses. Students should also be informed of how they can access central services. Likewise staff need to be made fully aware of the time commitment that will be required of them (to be available to respond to student requests). Good student support structures will be vital; a student away from campus, must be able to interact with his or her peer group and communicate with the University (for academic, administrative and pastoral reasons) and know they will receive a response in a set time. Cultural expectations also need to be considered particularly for overseas students, e.g. the relationship between student and tutor will need clear exposition,
- e) programmes should provide opportunities for students on distance learning programmes to foster a community of learners and for inter-learner discussions,
- f) the experiences of students on a programme containing distance learning should be regularly monitored, evaluated and updated, where necessary, at the Annual Programme Review meeting. Students should have appropriate opportunities to provide formal feedback on their experiences of the teaching.

## University Examination Regulations

### 1. Nominees

Unless the context indicates otherwise, under these regulations a University officer or the chair of a board of examiners may act through his or her properly appointed nominee.

### 2. Conduct of formal examinations

#### 2.1 Attendance

Failure to attend an examination without reasonable cause may result in the award of no marks for that examination. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of the details of the examination timetable. If a student fails to attend as the result of illness, he or she should obtain a medical certificate from a qualified medical practitioner as soon as reasonably practicable, and submit it forthwith to the chair of the board of examiners and copied to the appropriate faculty office.

#### 2.2 Entering the examination room

Candidates may not normally enter the examination room to sit a written examination nor undertake the written examination in any other location after it has been in progress for more than thirty minutes. Late candidates will be referred to their home school<sup>8</sup> for advice on the next course of action.

#### 2.3 Leaving the examination room

No candidate may leave the examination room within thirty minutes of the beginning of the examination, save in exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of the invigilator. In order to avoid disturbing other candidates, candidates may not leave the examination room during the last fifteen minutes of the examination, save in exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of the invigilator. If a student leaves an examination because of illness, he or she should obtain a medical certificate from a qualified medical practitioner as soon as reasonably practicable, and submit it forthwith to the chair of the board of examiners and copied to the appropriate faculty office.

#### 2.4 Supervised absence

No candidate may leave and return to the examination room during an examination unless supervised by an invigilator while absent.

#### 2.5 Communication during the examination

Unless an invigilator has given permission otherwise, during the course of the examination a candidate may communicate with no other person but the invigilator.

#### 2.6 Permitted items and texts

A candidate may take to his or her desk only those items and texts that are permitted for the examination he or she is sitting. It is the responsibility of the student's faculty or school to provide guidance to students about items, for example calculators, they may take into examinations and the responsibility of the student to establish which items and texts are permitted. Such guidance should be provided in a format and location easily accessible to the student, including in student handbooks or on school websites and should indicate to students the circumstances in which it is likely they will be granted permission and the types of materials they may be allowed to use. All bags, mobile phones, personal

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<sup>8</sup> 'School' should be taken to mean 'School or Department', whichever is more appropriate, throughout the Examination Regulations

organisers and similar electronic devices must not be taken to the examination desk, but must be deposited elsewhere, as instructed by the invigilator.

If the usual practice of the faculty or school is to allow students who do not have English as a first language to use a translation dictionary during written examinations, then the school should ensure that an "Authorisation for the use of dictionaries in examinations" form is completed and signed by the Head of School or nominee for each student. Where a student is studying across schools then the form should be signed by the Head of School for each of their units. This form should be returned to the student and it **MUST** be displayed on the examination desk when a dictionary is being used. Failure to display the authorisation will result in the confiscation of the material. All dictionaries used in examinations will be checked for annotations and markings and any dictionary deemed to contravene regulations will be removed from the student.

## 2.7 Distracting behaviour

Candidates may not smoke during an examination, nor behave in any way which is distracting to other candidates. A candidate who ignores a request from an invigilator not to behave disruptively may be required to leave the examination room. The candidate's examination scripts will be submitted to the board of examiners as they were at the time when the candidate was required to leave. The invigilator will annotate the scripts with the time at which the candidate left, and submit a report to the chair of the board of examiners.

## 2.8 Examination scripts

It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that all his or her scripts are appropriately marked with an identifying name and number. No candidate may remove an examination script from the examination room. No candidate may remove any other examination materials without permission.

A school may invite a candidate to transcribe or dictate an illegible script. Any transcription or dictation must be verbatim, and the student should be asked to sign the transcript to confirm that it is a true copy of the original script. The transcription or dictation will be treated as part of the formal examination process. Schools may also invite the student to undertake an oral examination.

## 2.9 Cheating

Cheating in an examination will be dealt with as a disciplinary offence under these regulations.

In particular it is a disciplinary offence for a candidate to:

- a. Have unauthorised items or texts at his or her desk in the examination room during the examination
- b. Make use of unauthorised items or texts during the examination
- c. Copy from the script of another candidate during the examination
- d. Dishonestly receive help from another person during the examination
- e. Dishonestly give help to another person during the examination
- f. Act dishonestly in any way, whether before, during or after the examination, so as to obtain an unfair advantage in the examination
- g. Act dishonestly in any way, whether before, during or after the examination, so as to assist another candidate to obtain an unfair advantage in the examination.

## 2.10 Suspicion of cheating during the examination

Should a candidate be suspected of cheating during the examination, the invigilator will confiscate any unauthorised material, indicate on the candidate's script that it has been confiscated due to suspected cheating, and remove the script. The candidate will then be given further examination books and permitted to complete the examination. The invigilator will seek an explanation from the candidate at the end of the examination, and submit an incident report to the University Examinations Officer who will notify the chair of the school board of examiners from the student's home school.

### **3. Other assessed work**

#### **3.1 Work must be that of the student**

Any thesis, dissertation, essay, or other coursework must be the student's own work and must not contain plagiarised material. Any instance of plagiarism in such coursework will be treated as an offence under these regulations.

#### **3.2 Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged inclusion in a student's work of material derived from the published or unpublished work of another. This constitutes plagiarism whether it is intentional or unintentional. "Work" includes internet sources as well as printed material. Examples include:

- Quoting another's work "word for word" without placing the phrase(s), sentence(s) or paragraph(s) in quotation marks and providing a reference for the source.
- Using statistics, tables, figures, formulae, data, diagrams, questionnaires, images, musical notation, computer code, etc., created by others without acknowledging and referencing the original source. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.
- Summarising or paraphrasing the work or ideas of another without acknowledging and referencing the original source. "Paraphrasing" means re-stating another author's ideas, meaning or information in a student's own words.
- Copying the work of another student, with or without that student's agreement.
- Collaborating with another student, even where the initial collaboration is legitimate, e.g., joint project work, and then presenting the resulting work as one's own. If students are unclear about the extent of collaboration which is permitted in joint work they should consult the relevant tutor.
- Submitting, in whole or in part, work which has previously been submitted at the University of Bristol or elsewhere, without fully referencing the earlier work. This includes unacknowledged re-use of the student's own submitted work.
- Buying or commissioning an essay or other piece of work and presenting it as a student's own.

#### **3.3 Avoidance of plagiarism**

Schools will, where necessary, provide further discipline-specific definitions of plagiarism and guidance on how to avoid it, including advice on proper referencing practice. However, it remains the responsibility of the individual student to familiarise him- or herself with these guidelines and to avoid plagiarism.

#### **3.4 Cases of bad academic practice**

In some cases a marker may be unsure whether irregularities in a piece of work constitute minor plagiarism or simply poor academic practice. In this case he or she should consult the chair of the school board of examiners for the student's programme of study. The chair will decide whether the case can be handled solely through school tutorial/student guidance processes or whether the procedure outlined in sections 3.5 and 4 should be

followed. If the former, a file note should be kept in the school of the advice given to the student for future reference.

### 3.5 Suspicion of plagiarism

Should a candidate be suspected of plagiarism, the principal marker of the work will notify the chair of the school board of examiners for the student's programme of study, providing a brief written report outlining the allegation and copies of both the assessed work in question and the sources that are believed to have been plagiarised, annotated as necessary.

## **4. Procedure for cases of cheating and plagiarism in undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes of study (including any taught component of a professional or other doctoral degree)**

### 4.1 Responsibility for handling allegations of cheating and plagiarism

Initial responsibility for handling plagiarism and examination cheating allegations in undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes of study rests with the chair of the school board of examiners from the student's home school.

### 4.2 Initial assessment of cases of cheating and plagiarism

The chair of the school board of examiners will decide, in consultation with the undergraduate or graduate education director of the faculty, and using the criteria listed in section 8, whether the case appears minor and can be handled at school level or more significant, requiring involvement from the faculty. The chair, in consultation with the undergraduate or graduate education director, will also decide whether or not to investigate examination scripts or pieces of work previously submitted by the student.

### 4.3 Minor cases – student interview

If the alleged offence of cheating or plagiarism is considered to be minor, the chair of the school board of examiners will notify the student in writing and interview him/her with the school examinations officer or other appropriate member of the school. The student will be informed in the letter of the pieces of work under consideration.

The student may be accompanied at the interview by an adviser, friend or other representative. Notes will be taken of the interview and subsequently agreed with all parties. Where the allegation relates to an assessment from outside the student's home school, the chair of the home school board of examiners will involve a relevant member of staff from the other school in the interview and in making the penalty recommendation or may delegate responsibility for the interview to the chair of the school board of examiners responsible for the unit. In the latter case, the interview panel will include a member of staff from the student's home school.

#### 4.3.1 Disposal by the School Board of Examiners

The decision as to penalty will normally be made by the school board of examiners. Following the interview, the chair of the school board of examiners will make a written recommendation as to the penalty, from those listed in section 4.3.2, to the full board. This recommendation will set out the misconduct admitted, a brief summary of the evidence received, the penalty recommended, and the factors taken into account in recommending the penalty. A copy of the recommendation will be sent to the student. It will be permissible to reach agreement as to penalty with the full board of examiners by correspondence if it is some time until its next meeting. If there is disagreement as to the penalty a full meeting will be required.

If the interview panel considers that the matter should be dealt with under student disciplinary regulations, it may, in place of a report to the board of examiners, make a

recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor to this effect. Examination offences which disclose gross dishonesty, such as substantial and premeditated attempt to gain unfair advantage, or cases in which the candidate and the interview panel are not able to agree an account of the incident, are appropriately dealt with under student disciplinary regulations. See section 7.

#### 4.3.2 Powers of the School Board of Examiners in minor cases

On receipt of the recommendation of the chair of the school board of examiners, the board of examiners may:

- a. Impose no penalty beyond recording the case on the student's school file for future reference;
- b. Disregard the original mark for the examination or piece of assessed work and require submission of an equivalent piece of work. The full mark range may be used for the new piece of work;
- c. Disregard the original mark for the examination or piece of assessed work and require submission of an equivalent piece of work. The mark for the new piece of work will be capped at the minimum pass mark;
- d. Award the student lower marks than those which he or she would otherwise have been awarded, or award no marks, for the examination or assessed work in which the student committed the offence without the opportunity to submit another piece of work.

This will be the maximum penalty for cases of minor cheating or plagiarism. The school board of examiners will take explicit account of the impact of this penalty on the student's credit points and, where applicable, degree classification and whether this impact is proportionate to the offence.

The penalty will depend on the seriousness of the offence, using the criteria listed in section 8. It will normally be assumed that mitigating circumstances will have been raised by the student in advance of the examination or submission. However, any exceptional mitigating circumstances will be taken into account when determining the penalty.

If, exceptionally, the school board of examiners feels that there are circumstances about the case that were not apparent at the time of the initial assessment by the chair of the board, and which might affect the route for consideration of the case, they may seek advice from the faculty board of examiners as to the appropriate course of action.

The student will have the usual right of appeal against a decision of the board of examiners.

#### 4.3.3 Recording the penalty

Brief details of the allegation and penalty will be recorded in the minutes of the school board of examiners, with a copy kept on the student's school file. Cases and penalties will be reported to the faculty board of examiners annually. Copies of the resulting minutes of the faculty board of examiners will be sent to the Academic Registrar who will keep a central record of plagiarism and examination cheating cases and report them annually to Education Committee. Cases of minor plagiarism need not be mentioned in student references.

#### 4.4 Serious cases

If the alleged offence of cheating or plagiarism is considered by the chair of the school board of examiners, in consultation with the undergraduate or graduate education director of the faculty, to be more serious than should be handled at school level, taking into account the criteria listed in section 8, the chair of the school board of examiners will notify



the student in writing that the case will be referred to the chair of the faculty board of examiners.

The student will also be informed, at this stage, whether any other examination scripts or pieces of work are under consideration.

#### 4.4.1 Student interview

A panel of three members of the faculty board of examiners (which will normally include a member of the student's home school board of examiners), selected by the chair, will interview the student. It may be appropriate also to involve a representative from the school responsible for the unit in which the irregularity has occurred, if this is not the home school. The student may be accompanied at the interview by an adviser, friend or other representative. The faculty manager or head of academic administration will attend to provide advice on regulations. Notes will be taken of the interview, which will subsequently be agreed with all parties. Where the chair of the faculty board of examiners is from the student's home school an alternative member of the board shall be nominated to chair.

#### 4.4.2 Recommendation to the School Board of Examiners

The decision as to penalty will normally be recommended by the faculty interview panel, initially, to the board of examiners of the student's home school. This recommendation, taken from those listed in 4.4.3, will set out the misconduct admitted, a brief summary of the evidence received, the penalty recommended, and the factors taken into account in recommending the penalty. A copy of the recommendation will be sent to the student by the chair or secretary of the school board of examiners together with an explanation of the next steps in the process and the likely timescales. It will be permissible for the school board of examiners to consider this recommendation by correspondence if it is some time until its next meeting.

If the interview panel considers that the matter should be dealt with under student disciplinary regulations, it may, in place of a recommendation to the board of examiners, make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor to this effect. Examination offences which disclose gross dishonesty, such as substantial and premeditated attempt to gain unfair advantage, or cases in which the candidate and the interview panel are not able to agree an account of the incident, are appropriately dealt with under student disciplinary regulations. See section 7.

#### 4.4.3 Powers of the Faculty Board of Examiners

On receipt of the recommendation of the interview panel, the school board of examiners may advise the faculty board of examiners to:

- a. Impose no penalty beyond recording the case on the student's school file for future reference;
- b. Disregard the original mark for the examination or piece of assessed work and require submission of an equivalent piece of work. The full mark range may be used for the new piece of work;
- c. Disregard the original mark for the examination or piece of assessed work and require submission of an equivalent piece of work. The mark for the new piece of work will be capped at the minimum pass mark;
- d. Award the student lower marks than those which he or she would otherwise have been awarded, or award no marks, for the examination or assessed work in which the student committed the offence without the opportunity to submit another piece of work;

- e. Award the student lower marks than those which he or she would otherwise have been awarded, or award no marks, for the unit of which the examination or piece of assessed work was part;
- f. Award the student lower marks than those which he or she would otherwise have been awarded, or award no marks, for the year of study;
- g. Award the student a lower class of degree or other academic award than that which he or she would otherwise have been awarded;
- h. Award a lower qualification than that for which the student was registered;
- i. Exclude the student from the award of a degree or other academic award, which may be either permanent or for a stated period, and may be absolute or subject to compliance with stipulated requirements; the award of a lower qualification may or may not be offered.

If the advice from the school board of examiners to the faculty board of examiners is not in line with that originally made by the faculty interview panel, the school board of examiners must explain the reasons for the change in their report to the faculty board of examiners and must also notify the student of their decision.

The penalty will depend on the seriousness of the offence, using the criteria listed in section 8. It will normally be assumed that mitigating circumstances will have been raised by the student in advance of the examination or submission. However, any exceptional mitigating circumstances will be taken into account when determining the penalty.

The school and faculty board of examiners will take explicit consideration of the impact of the penalty on the student's credit points and, where applicable, degree classification and whether this impact is proportionate to the offence.

The student will have the usual right of appeal against a decision of the board of examiners.

#### 4.4.4 Recording the penalty

Brief details of the allegation and penalty will be recorded in the minutes of the school and faculty board of examiners, with a copy kept on the student's school file. Copies of the resulting minutes of the faculty board of examiners will be sent to the Academic Registrar who will keep a central record of plagiarism and examination cheating cases and report them annually to Education Committee. Cases of cheating or serious plagiarism should normally be mentioned in student references.

### **5. Procedures for cases of plagiarism in a thesis submitted for a research degree**

*Transferred to Annex 8 of the Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes with effect from the academic year 2014/15.*

### **6. Students taking University of Bristol assessment, but not in attendance at the University**

6.1 All the above regulations will apply to students not in attendance at the University, including distance learning students, students on a year abroad, or international students who have temporarily returned home. In these circumstances it may be appropriate to replace the interview with written correspondence or a conference call with the student.

### **7. Disposal under Student Disciplinary Regulations**

7.1 If the interview panel considers that the matter should be dealt with under student disciplinary regulations, it may, in place of a report to the board of examiners, make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor, through the University Secretary, to this effect. Examination offences which disclose gross dishonesty, such as substantial and

premeditated attempt to gain unfair advantage, or cases in which the candidate and the interview panel are not able to agree an account of the incident, are appropriately dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

7.2 Where an offence of plagiarism or other examination offence has been referred under these Regulations to be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations, the Board of Examiners may not impose any penalty under these Regulations in place of or in addition to the penalty or penalties that the Board is directed to implement under the Disciplinary Regulations in respect of that offence.

## **8. Factors to be taken into account when deciding whether to use the procedures for minor or serious cases for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students**

- a. The student's year of study. First year cases are more likely to be considered minor. Finalist and taught master's student cases will normally be considered serious;
- b. Whether this is a first or subsequent offence;
- c. The extent and significance of the plagiarism in the piece of work. Plagiarism accounting for less than 30% of the piece of work and where there is evidence of independent argument and thought might reasonably be classed as minor;
- d. Whether the assessment contributes significantly to the student's progress or degree classification;
- e. Examination cheating should normally be handled under the "serious" procedures.

## **9. Guidance on the Procedures**

Guidance and advice on the implementation of the cheating and plagiarism regulations will be available from the Academic Registrar.

## **10. Information for Boards of Examiners**

### 10.1 Procedure for consideration of Extenuating Circumstances

Boards of examiners shall establish a committee (which will meet before the Board of Examiners meets) to consider any relevant matters, for example personal matters such as illness or bereavement, that may have affected a student's performance in assessment (see section 27 of the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes).

### 10.2 Evidence

If a student wishes a board of examiners to take any such matters into account, he or she must complete and submit the relevant form before the meeting of the board at which the student's performance in assessment is to be considered (for details of the procedure and a link to the form, see section 27 of the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes). A written record must be kept of such matters. Any such matters which could have been raised before the meeting of the board, but, without good reason, were not raised, will not be considered in the event of an appeal.

The committee may require a student to submit such other evidence as it deems necessary to substantiate any matter raised by the student.

## **11. Appeal against a decision of a Board of Examiners**

### 11.1 Right to appeal

A student enrolled on a taught (undergraduate or postgraduate) programme may appeal against an appealable decision made by one of the following (referred to in these Regulations as a "board of examiners"):

- a. A faculty board of examiners

- b. A faculty progress committee
- c. A school board of examiners in relation to a case of minor plagiarism.

A postgraduate research student may appeal against an appealable decision made by the following (also referred to as a “board of examiners”):

- a. The University Research Degrees Examination Board
- b. The Dean of the relevant faculty, on the recommendation of a registration review panel.

An appealable decision is a decision in respect of:

- a. An examination or other form of assessment
- b. A student’s progress, including a decision in respect of a suspension or a requirement to withdraw from the University, or in the case of a research postgraduate student, a decision by a Dean relating to termination or change of registration
- c. A penalty imposed for a cheating or plagiarism offence dealt with under these Regulations.

### 11.2 Permissible grounds of appeal

Appeals may only be made on the basis of one or more of the following permissible grounds:

1. There has been a material irregularity in the decision making process sufficient to require that the decision can be reconsidered.

For example:

- a. the assessment and subsequent decision making process were not conducted in accordance with the relevant regulations;
  - b. an adverse decision has been taken because of an administrative error;
  - c. the student has not been given the opportunity to draw relevant matters to the attention of the board of examiners; and/or
  - d. appropriate account was not taken of illness or other extenuating circumstances known to the board of examiners.
2. A student’s performance in assessment has been affected by illness or other factors which the student was unable, for good reason, to divulge before the meeting of the board of examiners (see section 10 of these Regulations).
  3. A penalty for cheating or plagiarism, imposed under the examination regulations by the school or faculty is wrong or disproportionate. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no right of appeal under these Regulations in respect of a penalty or penalties imposed under the Student Disciplinary Regulations and implemented by the board of examiners on the direction of the Vice-Chancellor or a Disciplinary Committee.

### 11.3 Grounds of appeal that are not permissible

1. Disagreement with the academic judgment of the board of examiners will not constitute a ground for appeal.
2. No appeal will be considered if it raises for the first time issues concerning the supervision or teaching of a student. Such matters will only be considered if they have been raised by the student promptly, at the time they first arose and pursued under the Student Complaints Procedure.

### 11.4 The Appeal Process

The appeal process has two stages:

- i The Local Stage
- ii The University Stage.

Those hearing the appeal at either stage will not attempt to re-examine the student, nor to appraise professional academic judgments, but will consider whether the decision made was fair, and whether all relevant factors were taken into account.

The University Stage of the process may only be invoked if the student has pursued the appeal through the Local Stage and remains dissatisfied with the outcome.

### 11.5 The Appeal Form

In order to start the appeal process, the student must complete the Appeal Form and submit it to the Faculty Education Manager within 15 working days of the notification of the appealable decision to the student. An extension of this time limit will be allowed, by the University Secretary, only in exceptional circumstances.

The Appeal Form must set out:

- a. the reason(s) for the student's dissatisfaction with the appealable decision;
- b. the student's grounds for appeal; and
- c. the outcome sought by the student.

All the evidence on which the student seeks to rely must be submitted with the Appeal Form unless there are good reasons why this is not possible. The student is encouraged to seek assistance from the Students' Union Advisory Service ([ubu-justask@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ubu-justask@bristol.ac.uk)) when preparing the Appeal Form.

### 11.6 The Local Stage

On receipt of the completed Appeal Form and any accompanying evidence, the Faculty Undergraduate or Graduate Education Director (as appropriate) will review the appeal on behalf of the Dean of the Faculty (who may also act in person if he or she considers it appropriate) with a view to considering whether the appeal can be resolved at the Local Stage.

In the case of an appeal by a postgraduate research student against a decision of the Research Degrees Examination Board, the Faculty Education Manager will forward the Appeal Form and any accompanying evidence to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) who will review the appeal at the Local Stage.

The person reviewing the appeal may invite another academic not involved in the appealable decision or in previous informal discussions to assist with his or her deliberations. Students may request the opportunity to attend the review at which their appeal is considered. The student may bring an adviser, friend or representative to the review and the Faculty Education Manager (or in the case of an appeal against a decision of the Research Degrees Examinations Board another appropriate person) will provide administrative support.

If the person reviewing the appeal considers that the appeal can be resolved at the Local Stage, he or she may take action to resolve the appeal, including but not limited to any or all of the following:

- a. refer the student's extenuating circumstances to be reconsidered by a committee under section 10 of these Regulations, if the person reviewing the appeal considers that insufficient weight was given to the student's circumstances by the committee;

- b. allow the student to submit late evidence of extenuating circumstances, if the person reviewing the appeal considers that the student had good reason for his or her failure to submit the evidence at the appropriate time;
- c. refer the appealable decision for reconsideration by the board of examiners, with or without a recommendation as to the outcome of such reconsideration.

If the person reviewing the appeal does not consider that the appeal can be resolved at the Local Stage the student may request that the appeal be progressed to the University Stage under section 11.7.

The Local Stage will normally be dealt with and the student informed, in writing, of the outcome of the review and the reasons for the decisions made, within 25 working days of the Appeal Form being submitted to the Faculty Education Manager (or, in the case of an Appeal Form which has been submitted out of time, within 25 working days from the date of notification, to the Faculty Education Manager, of the University Secretary's decision to allow an extension of time for submission of the appeal).

#### 11.7 Progression to the University Stage

If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Local Stage, or has not received the Local Stage decision by the prescribed time limit set out in section 11.6 above, he or she may request that the appeal is progressed to the University stage. The student should make the request in writing to the Student Complaints Officer ([student-complaints@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:student-complaints@bristol.ac.uk)) within five working days of the Local Stage decision or, if earlier, the expiry of the prescribed time limit. Upon receipt of the written request to progress to the University Stage, the Student Complaints Officer will obtain the Appeal Form and supporting evidence from the Faculty Education Manager, together with all of the evidence considered at the Local Stage and a copy of any decision letter sent to the student.

Upon receipt of the Appeal Form and other documentation from the Local Stage, the Student Complaints Officer shall refer the student's appeal to a Review Panel for consideration.

#### 11.8 Appeal Review Panel

The Review Panel shall normally consist of three members of the academic staff who have had no prior involvement with the appealable decision or the Local Stage.

The proceedings of the Review Panel will not involve a hearing. The Review Panel will consider the Appeal Form and other evidence and may:

- a. refer the matter back to the faculty (or in the case of postgraduate research students, to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)) for reconsideration with, or without, a recommendation for resolution. If following reconsideration at the Local Stage the original decision is not altered, the student may request that the matter be further reviewed by the Review Panel. If the original decision is altered, the student will have a fresh right of appeal in respect of the new decision;
- b. dismiss the appeal, giving reasons, and issue a Completion of Procedures letter; or
- c. recommend that a committee be appointed by Council to hear the appeal.

#### 11.9 Council Committee

If the Review Panel recommends that a committee be appointed to hear the appeal, Council will appoint a committee which shall normally consist of three members, including at least one academic member of Council or member of Senate, and which may include among its members University staff who are not members of Council. At the request of the student, Council may appoint a student sabbatical officer as an additional member. In the event of the Committee being divided in its view, the chair will have the casting vote. The

Committee will normally be chaired by a lay member of Council. Wherever possible the Committee should include at least one member of the same gender as the student.

#### 11.10 Clerk

The University Secretary will appoint a clerk to the Appeal Review Panel and to the Council Committee. The role of the clerk is to assist the Panel or Committee by collating the evidence, preparing the documentation, making arrangements for the hearing, taking a note of the proceedings and advising the Panel or Committee on the relevant regulations and procedures. The clerk may, on behalf of the Panel or Committee, ask for written witness statements or documents such as medical certificates to be produced. The student, the school and the faculty will be entitled to see all statements and documents seen by the Panel or Committee.

#### 11.11 Nature of hearing

The Committee will decide its own procedure. The student may present his or her appeal in person or in writing as he or she chooses. Witnesses may be asked to give evidence.

#### 11.12 Representation

The student may be accompanied at the appeal hearing by an adviser, friend or representative for support or representation. The Students' Union employs student advisers who may be asked to act in this capacity. In the event that the student fails to attend, without good reason, the hearing may be held in the student's absence. If the student has a good reason for not attending, the hearing will be rescheduled.

#### 11.13 Time limits

The University will normally comply with the following time limits:

- a. the Local Stage will be completed within 25 working days of receipt of the student's Appeal Form. Where the Local Stage has involved a meeting with the student, the Local Stage decision will be issued to the student within five working days of the meeting (these five days being included within the 25 day limit set out above);
- b. The Appeal Review Panel will meet within 20 working days of the student's request for progression to the University Stage;
- c. The Council Committee hearing will be arranged as soon as is practicable after the Review Panel's recommendation that a Committee be appointed. The Committee's report will normally be issued within 10 working days of the hearing.

If the University is unable to meet these time limits it will inform the student of the reasons for the delay.

#### 11.14 Nominees

Unless the context indicates otherwise, under these Regulations an Officer of the University or other designated member of staff may act through his or her properly appointed nominee.

#### 11.15 Report to Senate and Council

The Council Committee will report to Council, setting out, in summary, the grounds of the appeal, the evidence received, the Committee's findings and any recommendations or instructions to be made by Council to the board of examiners. A copy of the report will be sent to the student and to the Faculty (via the Faculty Education Manager) or to the Chair of the Research Degrees Examination Board, as appropriate. The Student Complaints Officer will present an annual report on appeals under these regulations to both Senate and Council and will inform the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) of any general recommendations made by Council Committees during the year.

#### 11.16 Powers of Council

On receipt of the report of the Committee, Council may refer the matter back to the faculty (or the Research Degrees Examination Board, as appropriate) with a recommendation or instruction to the relevant board to amend its original decision.

#### 11.17 Right to have degree conferred

A student may not have a degree or other academic qualification conferred until all his or her outstanding examination or assessment appeals have been resolved. If the degree or other qualification has already been conferred, either in person or in absentia, no appeal will be considered.

#### 11.18 Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

The OIA provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints. The OIA will only consider cases when the University's internal procedures have been exhausted. It will not intervene in matters which turn purely on academic judgment.

At the end of the appeal process the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter which will confirm the outcome of the appeal.

Following receipt of the Completion of Procedures letter the student is entitled to make an application to the OIA ([oiahe.org.uk](http://oiahe.org.uk)).

*Revised version approved by Council 5 July 2002.  
Last amended July 2014.*



## University Policy for Student Transfer between Undergraduate Programmes and Units of the University of Bristol

### ***Opportunities for the transfer of programme***

*Occasionally, a student may seek to change their programme of study; this may be for a number of reasons. It may be the student has decided that they no longer have an academic interest in the subject for which they initially registered or that they wish to pursue another subject. In either case, the following rules apply:*

1. Students, in principle, can transfer between programmes, subject to approval, but there is no automatic right of transfer between programmes. Transfer is subject to sufficient space being available and the applicant meeting the academic criteria and requirements for the new programme.
2. Providing the conditions for entry are met, permission to register for a new programme will not normally be granted outside of the following time periods, as it becomes increasingly difficult to catch up on the content of a new programme, especially where practical work is concerned:
  - Within the first TWO weeks of the first teaching block\*;
  - At the end of the first year of study, where the student has met the criteria for progression to the second year.

\* Students who still wish to transfer programme following the second week of the start of the first teaching block may be required to suspend studies for the remainder of the current academic session and commence the new programme at the start of the next academic year.

3. Students can, however, transfer outside of these time periods where the structures of the two programmes in question are cognate, i.e. sufficiently similar, so that the student would not be academically disadvantaged by the transfer, for example between an honours programme to one with a 'study in industry', or between a joint and singles honours programme, and vice versa.
4. Schools, subject to faculty approval, may allow the transfer of a student onto the final year of an Integrated Master's programme provided the student has fulfilled the equivalent programme learning outcomes for the programme to which the transfer is intended and the school is satisfied that the student is capable of performing at the standard required for the integrated master's degree.

*There are also academic reasons why a student may wish to transfer and, in some cases, a transfer of programme will be required where a student has failed to fulfil programme requirements.*

5. A Faculty Progress Board, or equivalent faculty committee, may propose that a student who has not achieved sufficient credit points for progression in one programme is offered the opportunity to transfer to a cognate programme, particularly in cases where the student is unable to achieve the credit points in a discrete part of the programme (e.g. in a single unit or in half of a joint honours programme). The proposed transfer will be at the discretion of the 'receiving' school.
6. Where this is the case, the student will be informed of the decision of the Board and given the opportunity to transfer to the recommended programme.
7. The accepting school will indicate to the student the point in the programme they will begin their studies following transfer and specify whether any credit and marks

obtained from units undertaken in the previous programme, which are common to the new programme, will be accepted.

8. Where a student has been required to withdraw from a programme of study, transfer to another programme may be permitted subject to approval by the receiving Faculty following consideration of the student's academic record, any pre-requisite study requirements, and the normal academic and admissions criteria for the receiving programme. Transfer to a cognate programme may be permitted at any level of the programme. Transfer to a non-cognate programme may be permitted provided the student enters at the first year of study.

### ***Opportunities for the transfer of (optional) unit(s)***

*Similarly, a student may seek to change an optional unit within their programme of study during the year of study.*

9. Students in principle can transfer from an optional unit to another optional unit in the same teaching block within their programme structure, subject to approval, but there is no automatic right of transfer. Students are not permitted to withdraw from a unit in the first teaching block and undertake a unit in the second teaching block as a replacement, unless there are validated extenuating circumstances.
10. Transfer is subject to: sufficient space being available on the new unit; the student's timetable; and, the fulfilment of any pre- or co- requisites that the new unit might have.
11. Permission to register for a new unit will normally only be granted within the first two weeks of the unit being taught. Where the taught component of a unit is delivered over a period of less than eight weeks, then the deadline in which students are permitted to transfer onto such a unit may be reduced to the end of the first week in which the unit is taught.

### ***Transferring a programme or unit(s)***

12. A student who wishes to transfer from one degree programme to another must first obtain the consent of both the Faculty and the School that will relinquish the student and the Faculty and the School (if different) that is accepting the student onto a programme.
13. A student who wishes to transfer from one unit to another must obtain the consent of their home School and also the School, if different, that owns the unit that the student is transferring from or onto.
14. The 'relinquishing' school must notify the 'accepting' school of any recorded issues relating to the student, particular those which have had or may have an effect on academic progress, prior to approving the transfer. Where the transfer involves a disabled student, details of any existing reasonable adjustments must also be shared with the 'accepting' school.
15. The arrangements for a transfer of programme or unit(s) on the return of a student from a suspension of studies must be set out and agreed by the relevant parties at the point of suspension.

Approved by Education Committee, April 2012  
Revisions approved by Education Committee, May 2014

## Guidance on Reasonable Adjustments to the Assessment of Disabled Students

### Summary

Disabled students are an integral part of the University community. As such, they have a general entitlement to the provision of education in a manner that meets their individual requirements. This entitlement extends to provision for disabled students at assessment.

The various parts of the equality legislation relating to disabled students in higher education<sup>9</sup> require universities not to discriminate against disabled students. Discrimination includes (1) treating a disabled student less favourably than other students and (2) failing to make 'reasonable adjustments' to both course delivery and assessment. As a consequence, the University must provide reasonable adjustments to the assessment of disabled students to ensure that they are not placed at a 'substantial disadvantage' in relation to their non-disabled peers. Although this obligation covers many aspects of higher education, this annex deals only with adjustments at assessment. Universities are not required to make adjustments to assessment which will compromise the academic, medical or other 'competence standards' of the degree programmes in question. This annex describes the types of adjustments which may be required and gives examples of good practice (with regard to reasonable adjustments) and of what would and would not be likely to be considered competence standards (in relation to assessment). It should be noted that all universities are subject to the public sector equality duty<sup>10</sup>, the effect of which is to require universities to promote and embed disability equality proactively across institutional structures, hierarchies, policies, procedures and practice<sup>11</sup>.

### Key concepts

- Disability
- Reasonable adjustments
- Competence standards

**Disability** – Section 6 of the Equality Act 2010 specifies that: **a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities**<sup>12</sup>. 'Physical or mental impairment' includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing. 'Long term' means that the impairment has lasted or is likely to last (may well last) for 12 months or more. 'Substantial' means more than minor or trivial. Case law has established that 'day-to-day' includes sitting examinations, which are not regarded as a specialised activity<sup>13</sup>. Unseen impairments are also covered (such as mental ill health and conditions such as diabetes and epilepsy). Cancer, HIV infection and multiple sclerosis are considered disabilities under the Act from the point of diagnosis. Progressive conditions

<sup>9</sup> The Equality Act 2010 replaced the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1995, amended 2001, 2005). In amending the DDA, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA, 2001) introduced the concept of 'reasonable adjustments' to the provision of higher education. The 2005 revision to the DDA placed a 'positive statutory duty' on public bodies (including the University) to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other persons and to avoid disability-related discrimination (among other obligations). All these provisions have been incorporated into the Equality Act, together with a new, broader public sector equality duty.

<sup>10</sup> The public sector equality duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and foster good relations between people with a 'protected characteristic' and those without. The 'protected characteristics' are: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

<sup>11</sup> The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published useful technical guidance for providers of post-compulsory education, which is available here:

[http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded\\_files/EqualityAct/technical\\_guidance\\_on\\_further\\_and\\_higher\\_education.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/EqualityAct/technical_guidance_on_further_and_higher_education.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6>

<sup>13</sup> Paterson v The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (2007) UKEAT 0635/06.

(such as lupus, multiple sclerosis) and fluctuating conditions (such as CFS/ ME, chronic pain) and conditions which may reoccur (such as depression) will amount to disabilities in most circumstances.

Disabled students at the University may include those with:

- Specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder (AD(H)D)
- Mental health difficulties, such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), bipolar affective disorder, psychosis
- Autistic spectrum conditions, such as Asperger syndrome, high functioning or atypical autism
- Sensory impairments, such as a visual or hearing impairment, blindness, deafness (with or without British Sign Language as a first or preferred language)
- Mobility difficulties, such as para- and quadriplegia, scoliosis, chronic pain affecting mobility
- Long term health conditions, such as arthritis, cystic fibrosis, narcolepsy, repetitive strain injury (RSI), cancer, HIV, hepatitis, multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease, chronic pain, lupus, chronic fatigue syndrome/ myalgic encephalopathy (CFS/ ME)

Students with any of the conditions listed above are regarded as disabled because they meet the definition of disability under the Act. This list is not exhaustive. A person with a long term health condition or mental health difficulty continues to be regarded as disabled despite fluctuations in the severity of their condition or, in the case of cancer, after recovery.

Many disabled students receive funding for study support via Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)<sup>14</sup>. However, a student need not be in receipt of DSAs to be supported as a disabled student at the University; they need only be disabled as described by the Act. Likewise, many disabled students receive advice and support from Disability Services; however, a student need not be known to Disability Services before they can be supported by others at the University, such as their tutors, their School/ School Disability Coordinator, the Library Disability Coordinator and staff and services across the wider University community.

**Reasonable adjustments** – Section 20 of the Act imposes a duty on universities to make reasonable adjustments for students<sup>15</sup> in relation to:

- A provision, criterion or practice – including assessment practices
- Physical features – including access to assessment venues
- Auxiliary aids – including exam support such as hearing loops, exam scripts in large print or Braille, and human support such as readers, scribes and sign language interpreters

Where the University's assessment practices put a disabled student at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with students who are not disabled, the University must take reasonable steps to avoid the disadvantage. Consequently, the purpose of the duty is not to confer an unfair advantage on disabled students but to remove barriers where it is reasonable to do so, such that disabled students have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/20>

The duty to make reasonable adjustments to assessment is anticipatory. The University should not wait until an individual student discloses a disability or until adjustments are requested. Instead, likely solutions to predictable difficulties should be prepared in advance such that disabled students are not substantially disadvantaged. There is no legal defence for the failure of an institution to make a reasonable adjustment. This would be interpreted as discrimination under Section 21 of the Act<sup>16</sup>.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education<sup>17</sup> defines reasonableness as follows: “The application of an adjustment will result from consideration of the circumstances of the individual student and will involve the student in discussion of possible courses of action. What is ‘reasonable’ for an institution will vary according to a range of factors and will depend on the circumstances of the individual case. Factors influencing the determination of what is reasonable will include the effectiveness of taking particular steps in enabling the student to overcome the relevant disadvantage, health and safety issues, the effect on other students and the financial cost to the institution.”

### **Examples of reasonable adjustments to the assessment of disabled students**

It is important that adjustments meet the needs of the individual disabled student rather than providing a generic response to a class or type of disability. It cannot be assumed that what works for student A on course X will work for student B on course Y. Once implemented, adjustments do not provide automatic precedents for other students, but may be taken into account when considering what would be appropriate in a different case. The following list is not exhaustive – neither in terms of the kinds of adjustments that may be required nor the types of students who may require them.

**Extra time** is often recommended for students with some kind of processing difficulty. This can be the result of a specific learning difficulty (such as dyslexia), a mental health difficulty (such as depression), or an autism spectrum condition (such as Asperger syndrome). It is also recommended for students with fatigue conditions (such as CFS/ ME) and for students who are prescribed medication which may slow cognitive processing (such as some medications for hyperthyroid conditions, depression or chronic pain). Extra time is often recommended at 25% of the prescribed examination time but may range up to 100% – for example, to allow a blind student to complete an exam using technological aids.

**Stop-the-clock rest breaks** are often recommended for students with fatigue conditions, mental health conditions (such as anxiety disorders), conditions which require the student to mobilise to relieve discomfort or pain (such as hypermobility), conditions which necessitate frequent visits to the toilet (such as irritable bowel syndrome or any condition which gives rise to bladder urgency), and to students who require higher percentages (more than 25%) extra time, since students whose exams last longer will need break time in response to additional working time.

Use of a **computer** (word processor) is recommended for students who may write slowly in comparison to their peers (such as some students with dyslexia and many students with dyspraxia), students whose handwriting is not easily legible, and students who due to a physical disability cannot write with pen and paper.

A **scribe** is recommended when a student can neither write nor type at a rate which would not significantly disadvantage them in relation to their peers.

An **exam paper in an alternative format** may be recommended for a student with a visual impairment, for example, an exam paper in large print or in Braille. A student with a

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/21>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationAndGuidance/Documents/Section3Disabilities2010.pdf>

particular dyslexic profile may be recommended an exam paper on a particular colour of paper or a reader to read exam questions to them aloud.

A student with anxiety might be recommended a **smaller venue**. This might also be recommended for a student with an attention deficit disorder. A sole venue may be recommended for a student who needs to mobilise (e.g., because of chronic pain) or read exam questions aloud or 'think aloud' (due to their particular dyslexic profile).

A student may be recommended a **scheduling adjustment**. This might include a recommendation not to have more than one exam per day and/ or to have a least a one-day break between exams, and/ or not to be scheduled for early AM or late PM exams. This may be recommended for students with fatigue conditions, long-term illnesses (such as cancer or the after-effects of cancer) or mental health difficulties -- or for students who require higher percentages of extra time (more than 25%) and/ or larger allowances for stop-the-clock rest breaks.

An **alternative form or time-course of examination** may be recommended where a student cannot display their learning in a traditional, speeded, timed assessment.

Alternative forms may include:

- submitted (take home) work, a viva or a submitted portfolio in place of speeded, timed assessments
- a series of shorter unseen papers in place of one longer paper, thus allowing a student to be assessed in the traditional way but over a longer time period

Where an alternative way of demonstrating learning is permitted, the expectation is that it will be equally rigorous in comparison to the assessment undertaken by a student's non-disabled peers. It must be as capable of demonstrating that the student has met the requisite learning outcomes as the original form of assessment.

### **Examples of anticipatory adjustments to the assessment of disabled students**

- Scheduling exams in venues with level/ lift access and easy access to accessible toilets
- Scheduling exams such that students do not have more than one exam per day and have a one day break between exams
- Where possible, offering a range of assessment options in addition to speeded, timed exams

The QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education<sup>18</sup> highlights: "There may be more than one way of demonstrating the attainment of a learning outcome, and the various possibilities should have been considered in the process of programme design. Institutions should use a range of assessment methods as a matter of good practice to provide opportunities for disabled learners to show that they have attained the required standard."

**Competence standards** – reasonable adjustments are implemented to prevent disabled students from experiencing substantial disadvantage and hence to support such students to achieve their potential. However, in defining reasonableness, institutions are not required to compromise competence standards. Within the Act, competence standards are defined as: **the academic, medical or other standard(s) applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability**<sup>19</sup>. Not all competences, assessment criteria or learning objectives which students

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationAndGuidance/Documents/Section3Disabilities2010.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/54>

might be expected to fulfil on a particular course are genuine competence standards as defined by the Act. These are the characteristics of a genuine competence standard<sup>20</sup>:

1. Its primary purpose is to determine whether or not a student has achieved a particular level of competence or ability
2. It must be specific to an individual course (not applied University-wide)
3. It must be relevant to the course
4. It applies equally to all students, not just to disabled students
5. It must not directly discriminate against disabled students
6. It must be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim

The 'proportionate' and 'legitimate' elements of this guidance refer to such considerations as:

- There must be a pressing need that supports the aim
- The application of the competence standard must be causally related to achieving the aim
- There is no other way to achieve the aim that has a less detrimental effect on the rights of disabled people

While genuine competence standards are exempt from the obligation to make reasonable adjustments, the method by which students demonstrate their attainment of a learning outcome is not itself a competence standard (although there are occasions where the competence standard and the method of assessment are inextricably linked, such as in the case of a musical performance). Thus, requiring all candidates to complete a written exam within three hours would lead to indirect discrimination<sup>21</sup> and discrimination arising from disability<sup>22</sup> against people with fatigue conditions, physical impairments, or specific learning disabilities unless it could be shown that the three-hour time limit meets all the characteristics of a genuine competence standard (see 1.-6., above). This would be unlikely in most cases given the variety of methods of assessment already accepted within the University. It will generally be difficult to demonstrate that the ability to make a written, time-constrained response is an integral and irreplaceable component of any standards applied in order to determine whether a student has achieved the required level of competence or ability. Failure to make adjustments to the mode of assessment for disabled students could therefore give rise to claims of discrimination, including a failure to make reasonable adjustments. In contrast, a method of assessment which required candidates to demonstrate synoptic knowledge of material studied over the course of one or two years is likely to be regarded as an acceptable competence standard. However, a method of assessing this knowledge which requires high levels of stamina in order to complete a number of papers within a limited time scale would not be justifiable.

### **Examples of what would and would not be likely to be considered competence standards**

The requirement for students studying for a law degree to demonstrate a particular standard of knowledge of certain areas of law in order to obtain the degree is a competence standard.

<sup>20</sup> ICDS (Inclusive Curriculum for Disabled Students) Guide and Briefing Series: 'Competence Standards', IMPACT Associates and the University of Westminster, 2009

<sup>21</sup> 'Indirect discrimination' occurs when a policy, criterion or practice applied equally to all students has the effect of putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage and is unlawful unless it can be justified as a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

<sup>22</sup> 'Discrimination arising from disability' occurs where a person is treated less favourably as a result of his or her disability and the treatment cannot be justified.

It matches all the characteristics of a genuine competence standard (see 1.-6., above).  
In contrast:

The requirement for students studying for a law degree to demonstrate a particular standard of knowledge of certain areas of law **within a certain period of time** in order to obtain the degree is likely not to be a competence standard.

This is because the competence being tested is not the ability to do something within a limited time period.

Sometimes the process of demonstrating whether a competence standard has been achieved is inextricably linked to the standard itself. Here, the passing of an assessment may be conditional upon having a practical skill or ability, which must be demonstrated by completing and passing a practical test. Therefore, in relatively rare circumstances, the ability to take the test may itself amount to a competence standard:

Being able to undertake a practical exam in medicine to demonstrate competence in dissection is a competence standard.

Similarly:

Being able to undertake an oral exam in simultaneous interpretation between English and another language is a competence standard for a qualification in simultaneous interpreting.

In these cases, the ability to take the practical or oral exam is part of the standard.

It may not be possible to make reasonable adjustments to the assessment of some competence standards:

A student taking a course with a strong practical element, such as car maintenance, tree surgery or dentistry, could not replace practical assessments with a written assignment or instruct an assistant to do the task on their behalf.

In practice, many examples are less clear cut and require careful consideration. When deciding whether the prescribed form of assessment is **inextricably linked** to the demonstration of the competence standard, it may be necessary to navigate complex issues:

- Does the course lead to professional recognition?
- If so, will it be possible to provide similar adjustments in the work place?
- What does the relevant professional body say?

If the course leads to professional recognition, there may be professional requirements to meet (for example, in the case of medicine and veterinary science). Professional requirements may be linked to fitness to practice. Professional requirements may specifically preclude the use of alternative forms of assessment. In light of current legislation, professional bodies should have revised their standards to ensure that they are genuine competence standards. Nevertheless, it may be necessary to enter into discussion with professional bodies if it does not appear that their standards are non-discriminatory. Alternatively, many professional bodies may be at the forefront of good practice, as indicated by the General Medical Council's current published list of reasonable adjustments, including reasonable adjustments to practical assessments, such as OSCEs<sup>23</sup>.

The following are examples which are unlikely to amount to competence standards in most cases:

- being able to cope with the demands of a course

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/undergraduate/appendix.asp>



- having good health and/ or fitness (if this is not relevant to the course)
- attendance requirements
- speaking or writing clearly (as in speaking distinctly and writing legibly)

### **How can the University avoid discrimination in relation to competence standards?**

All students should be given the opportunity to demonstrate their competence in the most appropriate way for them. Universities can benefit from taking an anticipatory approach and reviewing course standards to determine whether they are genuine competence standards. This can be accomplished by:

- Identifying the specific purpose of each competence standard and examining how each standard achieves that purpose
- Considering the possible impact of each competence standard on disabled students and if there are any which have a negative impact, asking whether the application of the standard is absolutely necessary
- Reviewing the purpose and effect of each competence standard in the light of changing circumstances, such as developments in technology
- Examining whether the purpose for which the competence standard is applied could be achieved without adverse impact on disabled people
- Documenting the manner in which these issues have been addressed, the conclusions that have been reached and the reasons for those conclusions
- Publishing course competence standards in marketing materials and course handbooks so that applicants and students are aware of what is required and can make informed choices

### **Further advice and support**

Current University processes for implementing reasonable adjustments (Alternative Examination Arrangements; AEAs) are here: [www.bristol.ac.uk/exams/alternative/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/exams/alternative/)

There are currently two routes for students to AEAs – either (1) by applying with evidence directly to their School via their School Disability Coordinator:

[www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/staff-professionals/school-disability/coordinators.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/staff-professionals/school-disability/coordinators.html)

or (2) by submitting evidence to Disability Services and meeting with a Disability Adviser to have a Disability Support Summary prepared (see below). This second route has some advantages for the student in that it provides Disability Services with the opportunity to:

- make broader recommendations for reasonable adjustments to course delivery beyond assessment (for example, adjustments to teaching and the provision of library services)
- open up a dialogue with the academic School about support for that student

**Disability Services** provides recommendations for reasonable adjustments via students' Disability Support Summaries. These recommendations are based on the contents of students' externally-conducted assessments (such as GP/ Consultant reports, Educational Psychologist and Specialist Teacher reports), on the summary recommendations contained in externally conducted, quality-assured Needs Assessments, on discussion with the student, the involvement of the Faculty/ School in more complex cases, and on the professional judgement of the University's Disability Advisers. In all cases, recommendations documented in a Disability Support Summary are evidence-based. In making their recommendations, Disability Advisers have access to input from their

professional body (National Association of Disability Practitioners<sup>24</sup>) and are thus informed by practice across the UK HE sector.

Guidance on working with disabled students and on Disability Support Summaries can be found here: [www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/staff-professionals/school-disability/supportsummaryguidance.pdf](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/staff-professionals/school-disability/supportsummaryguidance.pdf)

Disability Services provides confidential advice and support to prospective and current disabled students and to University staff who support them. Disability Services can be contacted by email: [disability-services-advice@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:disability-services-advice@bristol.ac.uk) or telephone: 0117 331 0444 [www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/)

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<sup>24</sup> <http://nadp-uk.org/>

## University Policy for the External Examining of Taught Programmes

This Policy summarise the University's expectations for the conduct of external examining of taught programmes. This Policy should be followed; any requests to depart from the Policy must be approved by the relevant faculty undergraduate or graduate Education Director and must be in accordance with faculty policy. This Policy can be viewed electronically at: [www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/exexs/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/exexs/).

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes: Rules for Assessment, Progression and Award of a Qualification.

The University has its own internal quality assurance procedures for the processing and consideration of assessment marks, and attaches great importance to peer review from colleagues in other academic institutions, professional bodies and industry.

The duties and responsibilities of individual external examiners will be based on their role to act as independent and impartial advisors providing informed comment on academic standards set, (including those associated with Professional and Statutory Bodies where appropriate) and student achievement in response to those standards.

The purposes of the external examiner system are to help ensure that:

- the University is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for its awards in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements, and that the standards of student performance are properly judged against this;
- the assessment process measures student achievement against the intended learning outcomes, and is rigorous, fairly operated, and in line with University policies and regulations;
- that the assessment process is fair and is fairly operated in the marking, grading and classification of student performance, and that decisions are made in accordance with University regulations;
- the University is able to compare the standard of awards with those in other higher education institutions;
- programmes and units are well structured and balanced with appropriate content;
- good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment is identified and shared.

This Policy contains information on the following:

1. Appointment
2. Training and induction
3. Duties of the external examiner
4. Boards of Examiners
5. Reporting
6. Data protection and commercial confidentiality
7. Fees and expenses
8. Discontinuation of appointment

Annex A	External Examiners' Report Form for Taught Programmes
Annex B	Response to External Examiner/s Report Form
Annex C	External Examiner Nomination Form
Annex D	External Examiner Re-Appointment Form
Annex E	Sampling of Assessed Student Work

Note: Use of the word school in this document can also relate to departments or centres.

## 1. Appointment

### *Forms and process*

- 1.1 Senate regulates University examinations and recommends external examiners for appointment by Council. In practice, Senate delegates responsibility for approving appointments of external examiners to the appropriate Faculty Board.
- 1.2 It is normally the responsibility of Heads of Schools to monitor all appointments and to ensure adherence to the appointment procedures for external examiners. Heads of School, or their nominees, after consultation with colleagues, will use their academic judgement in undertaking this responsibility.
- 1.3 For consideration by Faculty Board, the school must complete an External Examiner Nomination Form (Annex C, referred to here as the 'Nomination Form'), available at [www.bris.ac.uk/esu/assessment/exexs/](http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/assessment/exexs/). This Policy and the Nomination Form give guidance on the factors to consider when making the nomination.
- 1.4 The Nomination Form should be signed by the nominated external examiner, the Head of School (or nominee) and the Faculty Dean (or nominee) and reported to Faculty Board.
- 1.5 Once approved the completed Nomination Form should be sent to the Education Support Unit for the appointment letter to be sent. The Education Support Unit will send copies of the appointment letter to the school for information. The Education Support Unit will hold an archive of nominations and appointments.
- 1.6 The Education Support Unit will establish and maintain a list of the University's external examiners.

### *Duration*

- 1.7 The normal period of appointment of external examiners for undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes is four years (for the MBChB, BDS, BVSc and MEng Engineering Design it is five years). This does not preclude schools appointing external examiners for a shorter period of time if that is desirable for both parties.
- 1.8 The appointment may be exceptionally extended for a further one year period to ensure continuity, with the permission of the Dean of the relevant faculty. This should be done using a Re-Appointment Form, Annex D and found at [www.bris.ac.uk/esu/assessment/exexs/](http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/assessment/exexs/).
- 1.9 An external examiner will not normally be re-appointed within the five years following completion of their four, (or five year) contract.

### *Avoiding reciprocal and long-standing arrangements and conflicts of interest*

- 1.10 The Head of School is responsible for ensuring an accurate record is kept of the institutions where school members of staff are currently acting as external examiners. This list should be available upon request.
- 1.11 It is important for schools to ensure that they do **not** put in place reciprocal arrangements between cognate programmes with another institution. Schools should refer to the list detailing where their own staff act as external examiners, to avoid this occurring.
- 1.12 The incoming external examiner should not have been an external examiner for the University of Bristol or a member of staff or student at the University of Bristol for at least five years.
- 1.13 Where there is more than one external examiner covering a programme/s, the incoming external examiner should not be from the same department in the same institution as any other external examiner covering the programme/s.
- 1.14 The incoming external examiner should not be from the same department in the same institution as the outgoing external examiner.
- 1.15 The nominated external examiner and members of the school involved in the nomination should declare, using the Nomination Form, any conflicts of interests that should be given due consideration before the nominated external examiner can be formally appointed; these include:
  - Significant involvement in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question
  - Having a near relative as student or member of staff in the school
  - Personal association with sponsorship of students in the school
  - Involvement in assessing colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme
  - Holding a position which may have significant influence on the future of students on the programme
  - Membership of the University of Bristol Court or Council
  - Employment with one of the University's collaborative partners

#### *Coverage of the role*

- 1.16 The school should check that the incoming external examiner should not hold an unreasonable number of other external examiner appointments, (recommended no more than two appointments at any one time).
- 1.17 The Head of School should ensure that a sufficient number of external examiners are appointed to ensure adequate expertise is available to cover all the major areas of the programme(s) being examined including the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.
- 1.18 The Head of School should ensure an appropriate match between the numbers of external examiners and the quantity of material being examined.
- 1.19 At least one external examiner is appointed for each subject or group of subjects forming part of a programme leading to an award of the University.
- 1.20 In some subjects, for example where there are specialist units requiring particular expertise, the school, may appoint external examiners to act as external assessors. External assessors can carry out much of the work of an external examiner but

covering only one unit or a limited set of units. The school must also have appointed an external examiner/s who is able to take more of an oversight of the whole programme. External assessors are not required to attend Exam Boards.

- 1.21 In some subjects, for example where there are multiple external examiners who moderate different parts of the programme, it may be advisable to appoint a senior external examiner whose role is to assure the quality of the assessment and academic standards across the whole programme.

## **2. *Training and induction***

- 2.1 Where more than one examiner is appointed to a programme or unit, the school is encouraged to phase new appointments to enable mentoring of new examiners. Where only one examiner is appointed or phasing of new appointments has not been possible, a handover or shadowing of the outgoing examiner is encouraged.
- 2.2 An external examiner will normally be an academic from another UK higher education institution; however there are cases where someone from a professional, statutory or regulatory body or from industry is more appropriate. In these cases the school will need to provide additional appropriate support to enable these examiners to carry out the role.
- 2.3 Individuals who have retired may be appointed but they should provide sufficient evidence of continuing involvement in the academic area in question, and with current developments in higher education learning, teaching and assessment.
- 2.4 In cases where the external examiner has not acted in this role before for any institution the school should ensure that the external examiner is provided with the appropriate support to carry out the role. Support might involve assigning a more experienced external examiner as mentor; or using a team of externals, if practicable. Where it is not possible to have more than one examiner acting at any one time, due to the size and nature of the programme/unit, the school might consider supporting the new appointment through training and mentoring by an experienced examiner in a different field.
- 2.5 When an external examiner is appointed, the Education Support Unit will send him/her:
- a letter of appointment;
  - a link to the electronic template of the external examiners' report form;
  - the name of the school contact person, nominated by the Head of School;
  - a copy of the Policy for External Examining of Taught Programmes;
  - a copy of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes Rules for Assessment, Progression and the Award of a Qualification;
  - information about where to find University strategies, policies and procedures and the framework for UK higher education including subject benchmark statements.
- 2.6 The relevant school will send him/her, as and when appropriate;
- details of the programme(s) and units on which the students are being assessed (including content, structure, learning outcomes & assessment methods, for instance through the student handbook);

- draft examinations papers and assessments and the proposed marking scheme(s), including, if appropriate, model answers and marking criteria;
  - the relevant faculty and/or school assessment guidelines;
  - any further information relevant to the discipline, e.g. fitness to practice guidelines;
  - the fee/expense claim form and details of how to claim.
- 2.7 Schools and external examiners should be fully aware of information security when exchanging draft exam papers and other draft forms of assessment, see [www.bris.ac.uk/infosec/](http://www.bris.ac.uk/infosec/).

### **3. Duties of the External Examiner**

- 3.1 External examiners should ensure the programmes/units are coherent, that they satisfy the University's credit framework<sup>25</sup> and the outcomes are aligned with the relevant qualification descriptor set out in the applicable qualification framework<sup>26</sup>, with reference to subject benchmark statements where applicable.
- 3.2 Where applicable, external examiners should ensure that any additional professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) requirements are reflected and satisfied by the programme.
- 3.3 External examiners should review and approve draft assessment and ensure that assessment criteria, marking schemes and arrangements for classification are set at an appropriate level.
- 3.4 External examiners should quality assure the decisions of internal examiners, ensuring that the types of assessment are appropriate for the subject, the students, the respective level of study and the expected outcomes and suggest appropriate amendments where necessary.
- 3.5 External examiners should assure themselves that University procedures and regulations for assessing extenuating circumstances and borderline cases have been applied fairly and equitably.
- 3.6 Schools should ensure that external examiners are made aware of the outcomes of their comments and advice.
- 3.7 External examiners are asked to comment and advise on matters of curriculum content, balance and structure, in so far as these affect the programme academic structure.
- 3.8 The external examiner should normally be asked to review a sample of assessed work to enable them to assure the institution is maintaining academic standards. Guidance on how to select an appropriate sample of assessed student work can be found in Annex E. Schools/ Boards of Examiners should establish guidelines concerning the range of assessed student work that external examiners should sample as part of the quality assurance process and which should be brought specifically to the attention of the external examiners and, where appropriate, any additional evidence relating to the award of marks for that assessed work. The external examiner has the right to request to see all assessments that contribute to the degree result.

<sup>25</sup> The University's credit framework is outlined in the [Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes](#)

<sup>26</sup> The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and subject benchmark statements are available on the QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

- 3.9 The external examiner may be asked to adjudicate where there are disagreements between the internal examiners, although internal examiners should try to agree marks where possible and only send irreconcilable conflicts to the external examiner.
- 3.10 The external examiner must submit an annual report, providing commentary and recommendations as appropriate on the conduct of the assessment processes, academic standards, assessment and the curriculum design and delivery.
- 3.11 The external examiner should endorse the recommendations for award classification by signing the completed student degree classification list.
- 3.12 External examiners are normally required to be present at the meetings of the Board of Examiners for all programmes which lead to a University award, and to which they have been appointed as external examiner.
- 3.13 Additionally, the external examiner is asked to highlight and comment on examples of good practice, innovation and enhancement opportunities provided to students.
- 3.14 External examiners should satisfy themselves that the school has given due consideration to any recommendations given in the previous year's report, with any actions noted or rationale for the status quo.
- 3.15 External examiners can find guidelines for conducting oral assessments in the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes Rules for Assessment; these specify that two examiners should be present during oral examinations; the external examiner could be one of these.

#### *Improper practice*

- 3.16 If an internal or external examiner considers that a candidate has engaged in an improper assessment practice or other academic misconduct, the examiner should, as soon as possible, report the circumstances to the Chair of the appropriate Board of Examiners, who should follow the appropriate rules and regulations pertaining at that time.

## **4. Boards of Examiners**

See also the [Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes](#) for full information about the conduct of boards of examiners.

- 4.1 Schools should ensure they give as much notice as possible to external examiners of the dates of Board of Examiners and other occasions on which they may be required to be present so that the quoracy of the Board is met. In the event that an external examiner cannot attend the school should be informed as soon as possible in order to agree an alternative process, e.g.:
  - i. Telephone conference; the external examiner receives relevant paperwork.
  - ii. An alternative and appropriate external examiner attends instead.
- 4.2 Should neither be possible, the school should consult the relevant Faculty Education Director about what action is appropriate.
- 4.3 Schools should ensure that external examiners sign the completed student degree classification list, the template of this document is provided by the Examinations Office.

## **5. Reporting**

*How to submit the report and reporting deadlines*



- 5.1 The Education Support Unit will contact all external examiners annually by email and send them a copy of the External Examiners' Report Form, found at [www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/exexs/exexreportform.doc](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/assessment/exexs/exexreportform.doc).
- 5.2 The report should be completed in English on the *External Examiners' Report Form*, attached as Annex A. The completed external examiner report must not name or otherwise identify students on the programme or unit.
- 5.3 Reports must be submitted electronically, please email completed reports to [exex-admin@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:exex-admin@bristol.ac.uk).
- 5.4 External examiners' reports must be sent to the Education Support Unit by the relevant deadline of either;
  - 1<sup>st</sup> September (undergraduate programmes);
  - 30<sup>th</sup> November (taught postgraduate programmes run by academic year) or
  - 31<sup>st</sup> January (taught postgraduate programmes run by calendar year)
- 5.5 If the school is subject to external scrutiny, for example for professional accreditation, which requires the external examiner report to be submitted earlier than the normal deadline, the school must ensure that the external examiner is made aware of this earlier deadline.
- 5.6 The Education Support Unit will log receipt of the report and external examiners will receive an email acknowledgement.
- 5.7 When the external examiner is submitting a report for the final year of his/her period of appointment it is the opportunity for the examiner to write an overview of his/her experience at the University of Bristol. It should, therefore, include comment of the University's academic standards in the relevant subject and in particular any significant changes in standards over the appointment period.

#### *Serious concerns*

- 5.8 Should external examiners encounter particular problems during their term of office which they are unable to resolve with the appropriate academic staff and believe should be drawn to the attention of the Vice-Chancellor, they may submit a special report to him at any time.
- 5.9 The report should be addressed to the Vice-Chancellor and sent to the Education Support Unit at, 8-10 Berkeley Square, Bristol, BS8 1HH. The University shall provide a timely response to any confidential report received, which will describe the actions taken to address the concerns.
- 5.10 In the event that an external examiner has a serious concern relating to failings with academic standards and internal procedures and feels the Vice-Chancellor has not sufficiently addressed the concerns, the matter can be raised externally through QAA's concerns scheme: guidance for external examiners, please see [www.qaa.ac.uk/complaints/concerns/](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/complaints/concerns/).

#### *Internal procedure for receipt and circulation of reports and responses*

- 5.11 The Education Support Unit will be responsible for forwarding reports to:
  - Head(s) of School
  - Head(s) of Teaching / Education
  - Programme Director(s)
  - School Administrator(s)

- Staff as listed in the Nomination Form
- 5.12 It is normally the responsibility of the school to ensure that the external examiner report is circulated to all relevant staff including any unit and/or element leads.
- 5.13 The reports received by the Head of School will be accompanied by a Form for the Response to an External Examiner Report, Annex B, ('Response Form'), which, following discussion within the school, the Head of School or nominee will complete. Using this Response Form the school should note any issues arising from the external examiner report, any action/s required and any action/s taken.
- 5.14 The Response Form should be returned to the external examiner and copied to the Education Support Unit by email to [exex-admin@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:exex-admin@bristol.ac.uk). The Education Support Unit will log receipt of the Response Form.
- 5.15 External examiner reports and Response Forms should be appended to Annual Programme Review reports prepared by schools and sent to the Education Support Unit; guidance on APR can be found at [www.bris.ac.uk/esu/facultyadvice/progreview/](http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/facultyadvice/progreview/).
- 5.16 If the Education Support Unit does not receive the School Response Form as part of the APR papers, the Education Support Unit will contact the Head of School to request the Response Form and then refer the matter to the Faculty.
- 5.17 Once the school has completed and returned the Response Form to the external examiner the school should check with the external examiner that s/he is satisfied with that response.
- 5.18 The Education Support Unit will prepare an annual overview report highlighting themes arising from the University's external examiner reports. This overview report will be received and discussed at a meeting of the University Quality Enhancement Committee. The annual overview report is regarded as confidential but will be made available to various internal committees and groups and appropriate statutory and professional bodies.

#### *Overdue external examiner reports*

- 5.19 The Education Support Unit must receive the external examiner's report by the relevant deadline:
- 1<sup>st</sup> September for all undergraduate programmes
  - 30<sup>th</sup> November for postgraduate programmes run by academic year
  - 31<sup>st</sup> January for postgraduate programmes run by calendar year
- 5.20 If the report is not received by the deadline the Education Support Unit will write to the external examiner requesting receipt of the report in order to enable fee and expenses payment to be made.
- 5.21 The Education Support Unit and the school will work together to continue to regularly remind the external examiner until the report has been received.

#### *Disclosure of the report*

- 5.22 The report will be made available to various internal committees and groups and appropriate statutory and professional bodies. The report can also be made available to members of the public under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. By signing the External Examiner Acceptance Form you are giving your consent to such disclosure as the University considers appropriate.

5.23 The report will also be made available to students via the Annual Programme Review Report and the University's Blackboard site. Students are made aware of the identity and current position of external examiners appointed to their units, programmes and awards; students are advised not to contact external examiners directly. If an external examiner receives any direct contact from a student they are asked to refer the matter to the Education Support Unit.

## **6. Data protection and commercial confidentiality**

- 6.1 All personal data supplied by the external examiner for the purpose of their appointment and subsequently their engagement as an external examiner will be held securely and for no longer than necessary.
- 6.2 The University will use this data for communication about and payment of fees and expenses and for any other necessary communications. This data may be shared, if necessary, with schools of the University. The University will not disclose external examiners' contact details or any other personal details to third parties (i.e. outside the University) without the consent of external examiners.
- 6.3 External examiners should ensure that reports do not name or otherwise identify individual students on the programme or unit.
- 6.4 It is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure that any potential intellectual property issues that may require commercial confidentiality agreements (i.e. industrial placements) be resolved in consultation with the Faculty Office and Secretary's Office prior to the appointment being made.

## **7. Fees and Expenses**

- 7.1 Payment of external examiners' fees and expenses is the responsibility of the school, (or may be the responsibility of the faculty in some cases). The relevant school will determine the fee payable to each external examiner. The level of fee paid to an external examiner should be taken into account if a school is considering whether to ask him/her to take on additional tasks.
- 7.2 External examiners will be provided with a fee/expense claim form which should be completed and returned to the school.

## **8. Discontinuation of appointment**

- 8.1 The appointment of an external examiner may be discontinued by the University or the individual examiner before the completion of his/her period of appointment.
- 8.2 Where an external examiner resigns prior to the expiry of the appointed term the appropriate school is responsible for obtaining written confirmation of the resignation, advising the Education Support Unit and nominating a replacement.
- 8.3 In the event of unsatisfactory performance, the University reserves the right to terminate the appointment at any time. The decision to discontinue shall be based on a statement (usually from the Head of School) detailing the proposed grounds for discontinuation and submitted to the Education Support Unit. The final decision to discontinue will be made by the Dean. The Education Support Unit will inform the external examiner in writing of the decision and it will be reported to the school and the relevant faculty board.

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Approved by Education Committee, November 1998, Endorsed by Senate, November 1998  
Revised and approved by Education Committee, November 2002  
Revised and approved by Senate, December 2003  
Minor amendments approved by Education Committee, March 2004 and February 2005  
Minor amendments and Annex D (now Annex C) approved by Education Committee, May 2005  
Revised and approved by Chair of Education Committee, July 2005  
Revised and approved by Chair of Education Committee, October 2007  
Revised and approved by Chair of Education Committee, October 2008  
Revised and approved by Education Committee April 2012  
Revised and approved by University Quality Enhancement Committee May 2014

## Guidance for Faculties on Classifying Extenuating Circumstances

1. There are, in general, two types of extenuating circumstance:

1.1. Known Circumstances,

where the student enrolls with a particular ongoing circumstance which the University accepts and accommodates (e.g. visual impairment, dyslexia). In these cases, the University accommodates the student by establishing and implementing a Disability Support Summary (previously known as a 'Learning Support Plan') (e.g. extra time in examinations) in order to help them with their studies until they complete their programme. These circumstances should not be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee, unless the extenuating circumstance has had a further adverse effect that would require consideration by the Board of Examiners, since a reasonable adjustment to the assessment has already been made.

1.2. Developing Circumstances,

where the student develops either a **chronic** circumstance (chronic disease) or has an **acute** impairment (e.g. fractures an arm at the start of the exam period). These circumstances should be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee.

1.2.1. Chronic cases are likely to lead to suspension of studies and perhaps retaking of a year of study. It is difficult to be prescriptive and cover the myriad of possibilities, but developing chronic cases may be at such a level of severity that this form of extenuating circumstance leads to continued disruption on the programme.

Those other cases may lead to a level of adjustment being required, for example, extending deadlines, extra time in examinations. Consideration of students who develop mental health issues must be made with reference to the University's Policy on Student Mental Health and that "reasonable adjustments" will be made "to enable individual students to participate and engage in all aspects of university life".

1.2.2. Acute cases, may be able to be accommodated within the assessment process, for example, allowing the student more time to complete coursework and examinations. Retaking of the unit as a first attempt may also be considered appropriate. In exceptional acute circumstances, a higher mark may be awarded on the basis of performance in other contexts.

2. Boards should operate with three bands of classification of ECs along the lines of mild, moderate and severe. These are gradations along the same continuum in terms of impact on the student.

2.1. Mild ECs might include common (or 'day-to-day') illnesses such as upper respiratory tract infections and digestive upsets. These are perceived as having had a minimal effect on the assessment process. However, their timing may mean that the same common illness would shift from Mild to Moderate. **These would normally result in no change being made.**

2.2. Moderate ECs might include more sustained medical problems relating to the student such as a more serious version of those listed in 2.1 or the serious illness or death of individuals with whom the student has a close relationship. These are perceived as having had a moderate effect on the assessment process. These acknowledge that the student was affected by the ECs and that appropriate action is taken.

2.3. Severe ECs would include more extreme versions of the moderate ECs which are likely to be emotionally traumatic or where a student may have been admitted to hospital, and accordingly, these are perceived as having a severe effect of the assessment

process. These acknowledge that the student was affected by the ECs and that appropriate action is taken.

*Examples of either moderate or severe circumstances are by their very nature hard to provide since they are often complex; each case needs to be judged on its own merit. The following examples are therefore given purely to provide a framework. Where there is uncertainty professional advice, such as that provided by the University's Student Health Service, Counselling Service and Disability Services must be sought prior to making a judgement as to the severity.*

*In determining the classification of an extenuating circumstance, Extenuating Circumstances Committees should consider whether the circumstance is:*

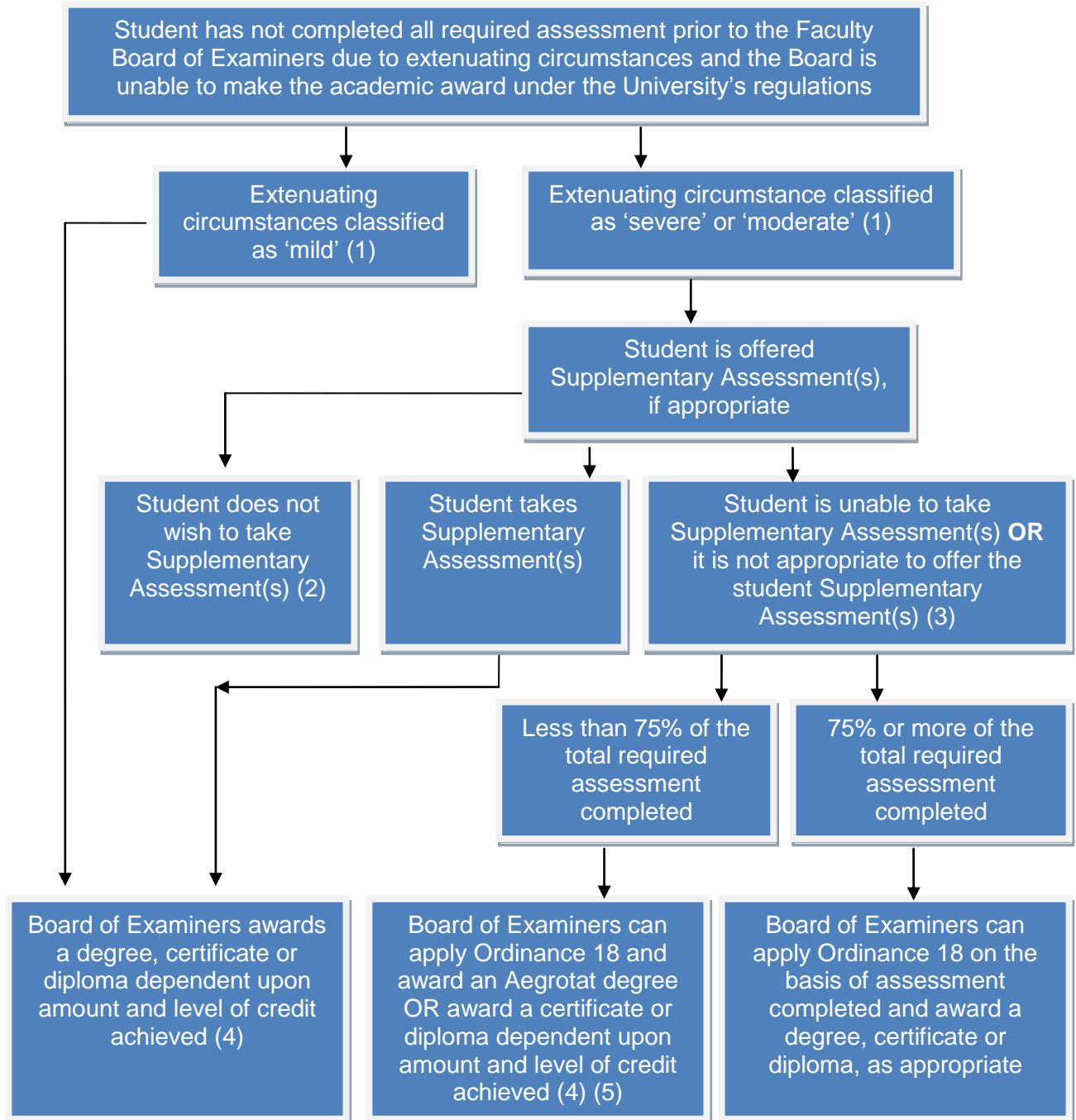
- *timely – to what extent the circumstance has directly affected the assessment event, if at all;*
- *sufficiently severe – so as to have a significant impact upon performance;*
- *unexpected – whether the circumstance could not have been foreseen.*

<i>Sectioned under the mental health act</i>	<i>severe</i>	<i>acute/chronic</i>
<i>Death of close relative or friend during the assessment period</i>	<i>severe</i>	<i>acute</i>
<i>Death of close relative or friend prior to the assessment period</i>	<i>moderate</i>	<i>chronic</i>
<i>Ongoing mental health issues which are not being controlled with professional support and which have markedly affected learning</i>	<i>severe</i>	<i>chronic</i>
<i>Ongoing mental health issues which are being controlled with professional support and where appropriate support for learning is in place</i>	<i>moderate/mild</i>	<i>chronic</i>
<i>Severe physical trauma or emotional distress during the assessment period e.g. road traffic accident, violent crime, domestic violence.</i>	<i>severe</i>	<i>acute/chronic</i>
<i>Severe physical trauma or emotional distress prior to the assessment period e.g. road traffic accident, violent crime, domestic violence.</i>	<i>moderate</i>	<i>chronic</i>
<i>Medical condition which may have affected learning e.g. glandular fever</i>	<i>moderate/mild</i>	<i>chronic</i>
<i>Medical condition which may vary in impact depending upon the timing (i.e. proximity to the assessment) (e.g. gastroenteritis)</i>	<i>mild-moderate</i>	<i>acute</i>
<i>Skin infection</i>	<i>mild - moderate</i>	<i>acute/chronic</i>
<i>Anxiety</i>	<i>mild - severe</i>	<i>acute</i>
<i>Appendicitis</i>	<i>severe</i>	<i>acute</i>

**Applying Ordinance 18 with Respect to Final Year Undergraduate Students Who Have Not Completed All Required Assessment for Academic Award due to Extenuating Circumstances**

This guidance should be read in conjunction with Ordinance 18. It provides the various options for final year undergraduate students who are unable to complete all the required assessment for their academic award due to extenuating circumstances.

Ordinance 18 should only be applied where the student has not completed all required assessment and it is not possible to award the qualification for which the student is registered under the University's regulations.



## NOTES

1. See section 27 in the Code: 'Extenuating circumstances'.
2. For example, a student may already have found employment which does not require an honours degree.
3. Due to severe extenuating circumstances.
4. See the University's credit framework.
5. If a student has died before completing all required assessment for academic award then the relevant Board of Examiners may award an Aegrotat degree or classified award, as appropriate.

Approved by Education Committee, May 2012

## Ordinance 18

### **Failure to Complete Assessment**

#### **Failure to complete part of the assessment**

A candidate may be prevented by illness or other substantial cause from completing a minor part of the assessment for an academic award. Provided this does not exceed one quarter of the total, and provided there is sufficient evidence of the candidate's ability, then on the recommendation of the relevant board of examiners for the programme of study, the faculty board of examiners may allow the candidate to pass, where appropriate with a classified award.

#### **Aegrotat awards**

Aegrotat awards do not include an honours degree or an award with commendation or distinction. They will not be made to candidates for academic awards which deem the holder to be fit to practise in a professional capacity.

In the following circumstances the faculty board of examiners may decide that an aegrotat award should be made:

- a) if the candidate has been prevented by illness or other substantial cause from completing a minor part of the assessment for an academic award, as under Failure to Complete Part of the Assessment above, but there is insufficient evidence of the candidate's ability for the examiners to make a classified award; or
- b) the candidate has been prevented by illness or other substantial cause from completing the whole or a major part of the assessment; and in addition to case a) or b),
- c) the candidate is unable to undergo assessment at a later date in accordance with regulations, or the department and student consider this undesirable or impracticable; and
- d) the candidate has demonstrated that he or she is worthy of an aegrotat award; and
- e) the candidate agrees to an aegrotat award.



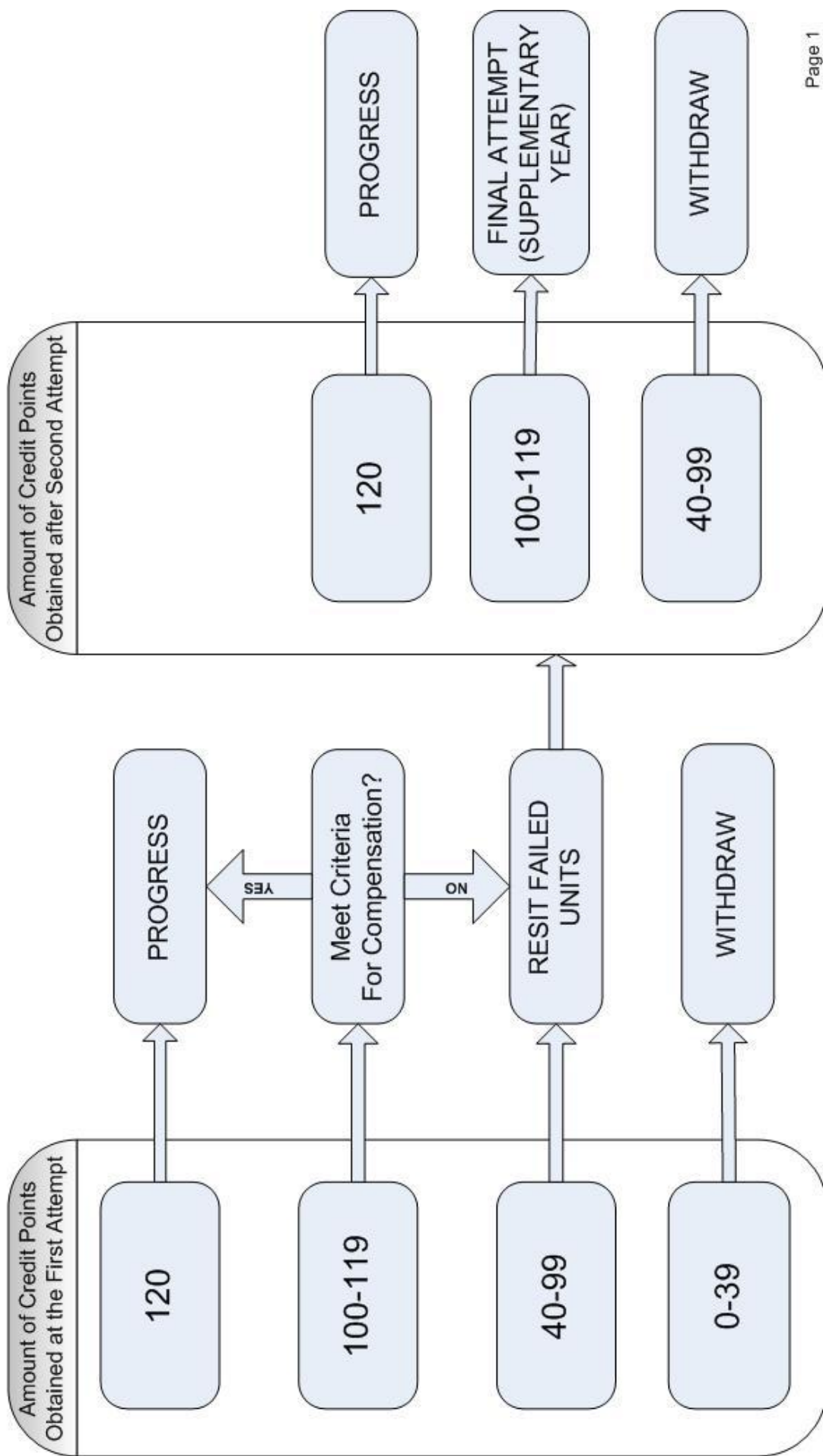
## Annex 11

### **Flow diagram to show options for the progression and completion of students on taught modular programmes**

*These flow diagrams are for illustrative purposes only and must be read in conjunction with the relevant regulations that are set out in this Code.*

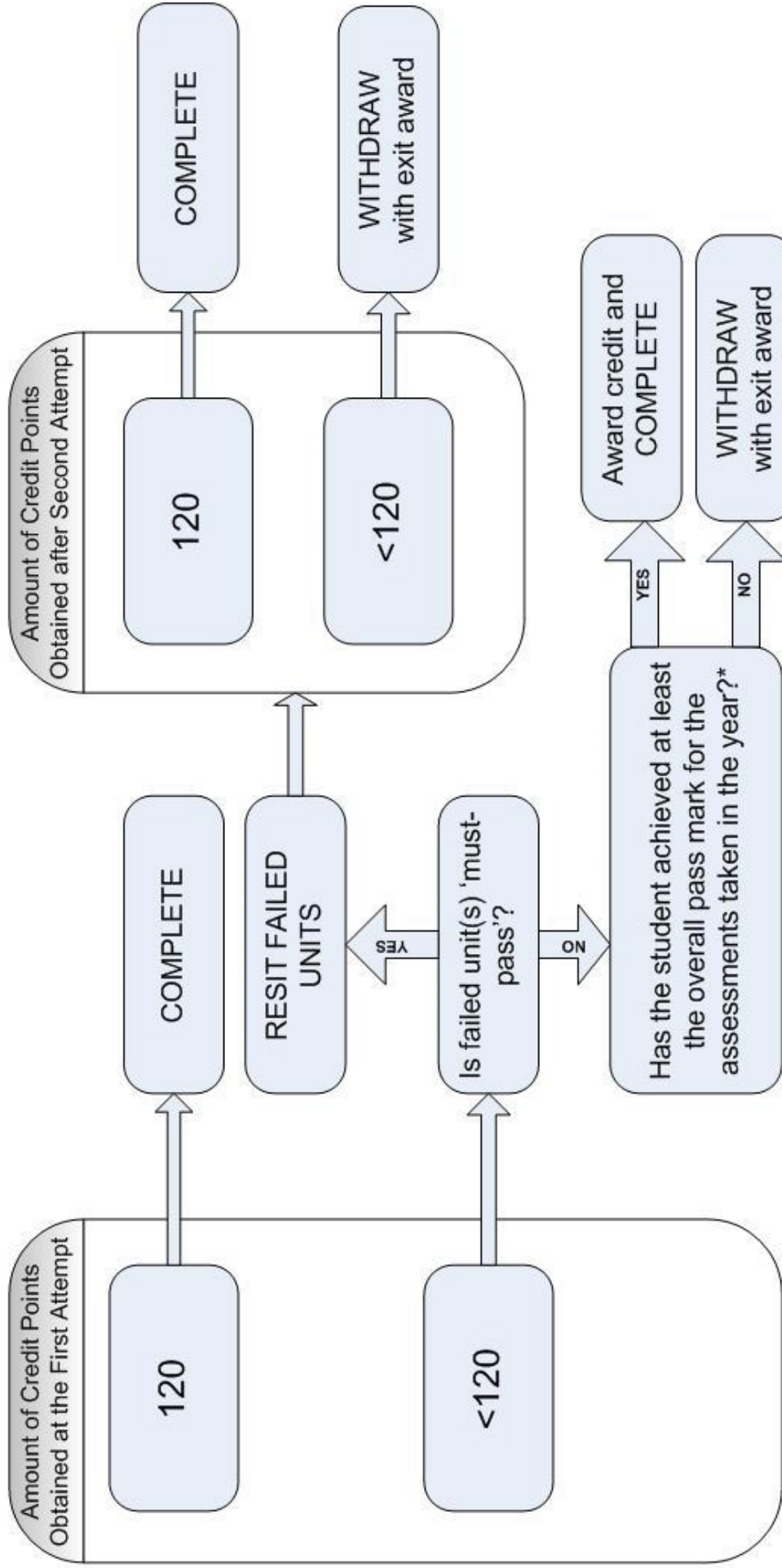
# Flow Diagram for Student Progression in Undergraduate Modular Programmes

For newly registered students starting in and after 2011/12



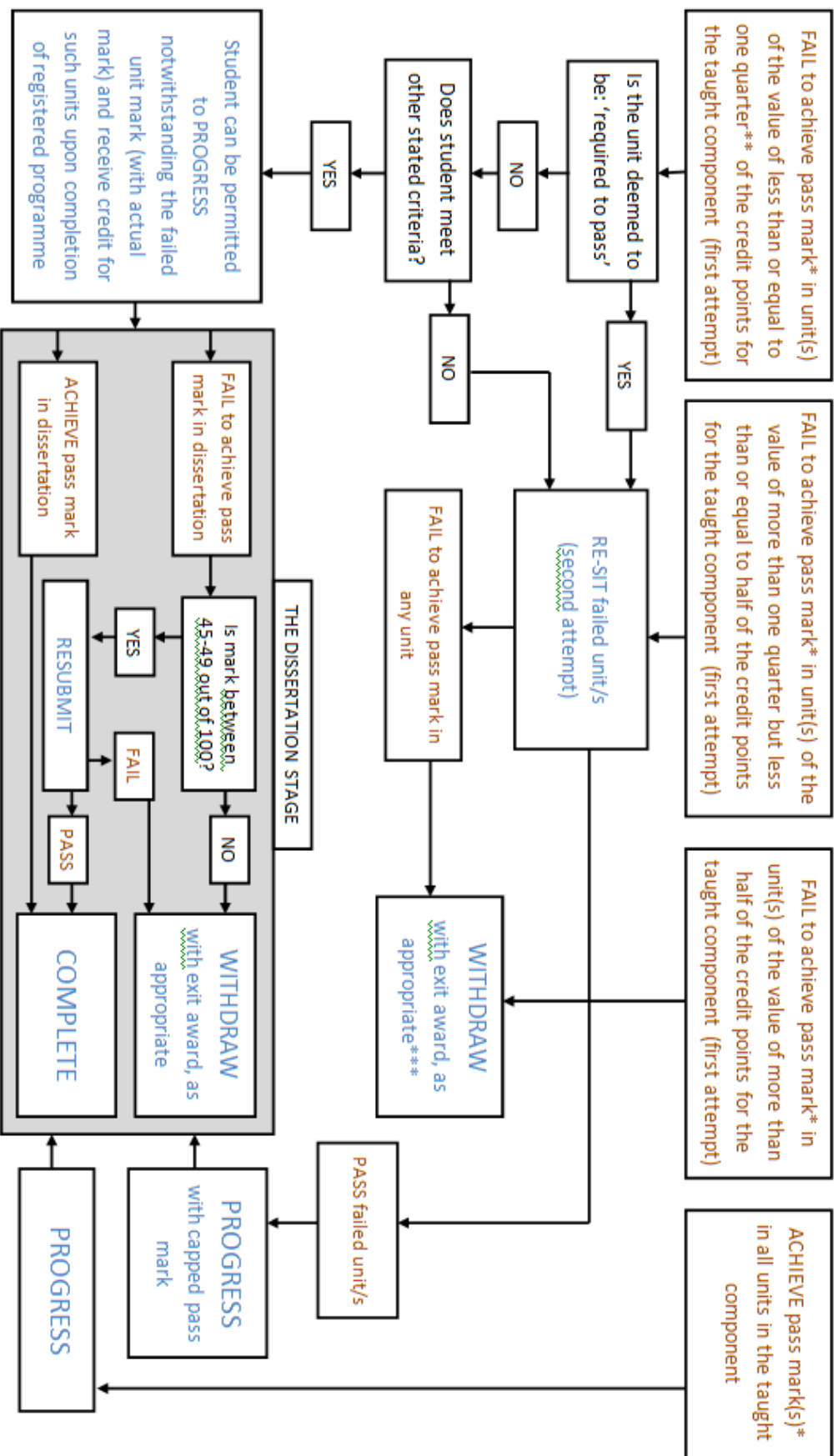
# Flow Diagram for Completion in the Final Year of Study in Undergraduate Modular Programmes

For newly registered students starting in and after 2011/12



\* a Faculty Board of Examiners can treat the final year of study as an overall block of 120 credit points for the purpose of awarding a qualification

## Award of Credit for the Purpose of Progression and Completion in Taught Postgraduate Masters Programmes (without extenuating circumstances)



\* add meet any additional criteria, if applicable \*\* or more, depending upon the credit point value of all units in the taught component, see 24.11  
 \*\*\* exceptionally, the Faculty Board of Examiners may decide to permit the student to repeat the taught component or undertake the 'supplementary year'

## Guidance for Faculties on the Supplementary Year

See section 15 in the Taught Code.

### *Recording the supplementary year on the student record system*

- 1.1 Students who are required to re-sit the whole year and those who are to be placed on the supplementary year to re-take the units they have failed should be registered on the student records system (SITS) as RR with the relevant mode of attendance.
- 1.2 The table below sets out the status and mode of attendance fields that should be used in SITS to identify the students:

Category	Outcome	For	Status	Mode
1.	Students who have failed a unit (of up to 20 credit points in undergraduate modular programmes) and cannot progress to the next academic year. This normally would result from failing their end of year exams and their subsequent re-sit.	UG	RR	PV
2.	Students who have not, as a result of previous suspension of studies or extenuating circumstances (which have been recognised by the Faculty), passed the required units for them to progress at the start of the next academic year.	UG/PG	RR	FT
	This may include students who have not had the opportunity to take re-sit exams in failed units prior to the start of the next academic year.	UG/PG	RR	PV
		c) In exceptional circumstances: register on supplementary year, engage with the content of the unit from home (refer 3.6-3.7 of the guidance)	UG/PG	RE

- 1.3 Students registered on the supplementary year will be automatically registered and timetabled for the relevant exams and captured in the appropriate statutory returns.

### *Attendance requirements for Students on the Supplementary Year*

- 2.1 All Category 1 students are expected to be in regular contact with the faculty / school / department and to be in attendance at certain components of the unit and to fulfil any specific attendance requirements as determined by the faculty.
- 2.2 Sponsored tier 4 international students are subject to attendance monitoring requirements throughout the whole year on a twice per teaching block basis and

will be expected to be in regular contact with the faculty / school / department, such that our reporting responsibilities can be fulfilled. Such students will also need to be registered for a minimum of one unit per teaching block so their continual contact with the University can be assessed.

- 2.3 In such exceptional circumstances the faculty can decide to allow a student to be registered on the supplementary year on the unit/s they have failed but to engage with the content of the failed units and with their personal tutor from home. Where this is permitted, an exceptional flag (RE) will be placed against the student on SITS. It is important to identify such students separately for attendance monitoring purposes.
- 2.4 International students who are permitted to return to their home country to engage with the content of the failed unit/s will need to be reported to the Home Office and these students may be required to apply for a separate visa to re-enter the UK to re-sit their exam.

#### *Fees*

- 3.1 Students re-taking a whole year of study should be charged the full undergraduate or taught postgraduate fee.
- 3.2 Students re-taking failed units should be charged for the unit as a pro rata amount of the full yearly programme fee.
- 3.3 Faculties can determine whether to waive the unit fee/s for students who, in exceptional circumstances, are permitted to engage with the content of their failed unit/s while at home.

#### *Financial Assistance for Students*

- 4.1 In most cases, home undergraduate students are currently able to access a "plus one" year of statutory funding for an additional year of study. Depending on the circumstances, further years may also be available; however the standard entitlement is one extra year. Students will be able to access tuition fee and maintenance (living costs) support where applicable. The rate of tuition fee loan will be commensurate with the tuition fees charged (i.e. if the tuition fees are pro rata depending on units taken, the tuition fee loan will be for the same amount (subject to the maximum available). In all scenarios of repeat year attendance, students are advised to contact the Student Funding Office for individual advice ([student-funding@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:student-funding@bristol.ac.uk)).
- 4.2 Self-funded students (both UG and PG) will need to meet the additional tuition fee costs themselves. In addition, Tier 4 sponsored students are expected to be self-funded and so there is limited financial assistance that the University can provide. However, the University does operate an International Hardship Fund which can assist students who are encountering specific financial difficulties; however this fund cannot assist with tuition fees. Further details are available from the Student Funding Office: [student-funding@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:student-funding@bristol.ac.uk).

Approved by Education Committee      July 2010  
Amended February 2012 and June 2014

## Calculating the Unit Mark, Year Mark, Taught Component Mark, Final Programme Mark and Degree Classification in Taught Programmes

(for the new regulations for progression and completion)

The following examples are intended to assist by applying the rules to a set of hypothetical run of marks

**EXAMPLE 1** is a student on an integrated MSci undergraduate programme

### 1. Calculation of unit mark

The summative assessment for a notional unit 1 consists of:

- Essay (40%),
- Unseen written exam (40%),
- Oral presentation (20%).

The final unit mark is calculated from the assessment marks (all marked on the 0-100 scale) thus:

<i>Level 4-6 unit (pass mark of 40/100)</i>	<b>Essay (40%)</b>	<b>Unseen written exam (40%)</b>	<b>Oral exam (20%)</b>	<b>Final unit mark</b>
<b>Score (out of 100)</b>	68	59	72	
<b>Weighted mark</b>	68 x 40 = 2720	59 x 40 = 2360	72 x 20 = 1440	2720 + 2360 + 1440 = 6520 6520/100= <b>65.2*</b> (65)

(If some assessments are marked on the 0-20 point scale section 16 of the Code explains how to calculate the unit mark).

**So** credit is awarded for unit 1 (assuming the student has fulfilled any other criteria) with a mark of 65.2 whilst the rounded mark of 65 is displayed.

### 2. Calculating the Year Mark for the Purposes of Progression

The 'year mark' needs to be calculated for the purposes of applying the progression rules in section 30 of the Code. This is done by averaging the unit marks following weighting (corresponding to the credit point value) where the notional unit marks in year 2 are:

Level 5 units (pass mark 40/100)	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	Total
	(20cp)	(20cp)	(40cp)	(30cp)	(10cp)	(120cp)
Unit mark	65.2	52.4	52.3	55.8	46.0	
Unit mark for progression and the award of credit (to nearest integer)	Pass (65)	Pass (52)	Pass (52)	Pass (56)	Pass (46)	
Weighted unit mark - by credit value of each unit	65.2 x 20 = 1304	52.4 x 20 = 1048	52.3 x 40 = 2092	55.8 x 30 = 1674	46.0 x 10 = 460	1304 + 1048 + 2092 + 1674 + 460 = 6578/120 = <b>54.816...*</b> (55)

\*The result is rounded to the nearest integer to determine whether the student has achieved the required level of attainment to progress to the next year of study, so in this example the exact average is **54.816...** In order to determine progression to the next year of the programme on the basis of the student achieving the pass mark in each unit and achieving the programme requirement of a year mark of 55 or more out of 100 (see section 30 of the Code) - the year mark is rounded to the nearest integer i.e. **55** and progression is permitted.

### 3. Calculating the Final Programme Mark and Degree Classification

For this Integrated Master's programme, with study abroad the year of study weighting is 0:15:10:75 (see annex 14 for the agreed weightings by programme).

The final programme mark and degree classification is reached by calculating all the year marks (with credit point weighting – as in section 2 previously) and then applying the primary and secondary rules, as follows:

Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
Unit Mark	Credit Points	Unit Mark	Credit Points	Unit Mark	Credit Points
65.2	20	68.0	120	64.5	20
52.4	20			70.4	20
52.3	40			78.2	20
55.8	30			71.8	20
46.0	10			66.5	20
				72.0	20
<b>54.816...</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>68.0</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>70.566...</b>	<b>120</b>



### **Application of Primary Rule**

Apply the weighting (0:15:10:75) to the year marks, not the rounded year marks, to give a weighted year mark.

$$\text{Year 2} = 15 \times 54.816\dots = 822.24$$

$$\text{Year 3} = 10 \times 68.0 = 680$$

$$\text{Year 4} = 75 \times 70.566\dots = 5292.45$$

$$\text{All years} = 822.24 + 680 + 5292.45 = 6794.69 / 100 = \mathbf{67.9469}$$

Final programme mark is rounded to the nearest integer = **68**

As the final programme mark of **68** is within the borderline for a first class degree (see section 33 of the Code) the secondary rule is applied.

### **Application of the Secondary Rule for Degree Classification**

*“If the final summative programme mark falls within the range of one of the classification boundaries, the higher degree classification will only be awarded if 50% or more of the individual unit marks, weighted by credit point value and year of study, which contribute to the degree classification are achieved at the higher class, otherwise the lower class will be awarded.”*

Year 2

- 0 of 120 credit points in higher class
- Apply 15% weighting for the year of study =  $0 \times 15 = 0$  weighted credit points

Year 3

- 0 of 120 credit points in higher class
- Apply 10% weighting for the year of study =  $0 \times 10 = 0$  weighted credit points

Year 4

- 80 of 120 credit points in higher class
- Apply 75% weighting =  $80 \times 75 = 6000$  weighted credit points

Add weighted credits -  $0 + 0 + 6000 = 6000 / 100 = 60$  out of 120 total possible credit points. Thus 50% of the credits are in the higher classification and so the higher class (I) may be awarded.

---

## EXAMPLE 2 – A student on a Bachelor of Arts undergraduate programme

### 1. Calculating the Unit Mark

The summative assessment for notional unit 1 consists of:

- Essay (40%),
- Unseen written exam (60%).

The final unit mark is calculated from the assessment marks (all marked on the 0-100 scale):

Level 4-6 unit (pass mark 40/100)	Essay (40%)	Unseen written exam (60%)	Total unit mark
<b>Score (out of 100)</b>	44	37	
<b>Weighted mark</b>	44 x 40 = 1760	37 x 60 = 2220	1760 + 2220 = 3980  3980/100 = <b>39.8*</b> (40)

(If some assessments are marked on the 0-20 point scale section 20 of the Code explains how to calculate the unit mark).

So credit is awarded for unit 1 (assuming the student has fulfilled any other criteria) with a mark of 39.8, whilst the rounded mark of 40 is displayed.

### 2. Calculating the Second Year Mark for the Purposes of Progression

The 'year mark' is calculated by averaging the unit marks following weighting (corresponding to the credit point value) where the notional unit marks for the second year of study are:

Level 5 units (unit pass mark of 40 out of 100)	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	Total
	(20cp)	(20cp)	(20cp)	(30cp)	(30cp)	(120cp)
<b>Unit mark</b>	39.8	45.8	39.4	42.2	41.0	
<b>For the award of credit and progression</b>	Pass (40)	Pass (46)	Fail (39)	Pass (42)	Pass (41)	
<b>Weighted mark (corresponding to credit point value)</b>	39.8 x 20 = 796	45.8 x 20 = 916	39.4 x 20 = 788	42.2 x 30 = 1266	41.0 x 30 = 1230	796 + 916 + 788 + 1266 + 1230 = 4996  4996/120 = <b>41.633...</b>  (42)*

\* The result mark is rounded to the nearest integer for the purposes of applying rules for progression.

This student has failed UNIT 3 (20 credit points) so the rule in section 30.12 of the Code may be considered:

- ✓ The volume of credit points failed (20) is within the specified amount permitted (20).
- ✓ The failed unit mark (39) is within the specified range of the pass mark (35-39).
- ✓ The rounded overall weighted average year mark (42) is at or higher than the weighted average pass mark of all the taught units taken in the year (40).
- ✓ Student meets all other criteria in 30.12 of the Code.

Therefore the board of examiners may permit the student to progress to the next year of study notwithstanding a failed unit mark.

### 3. Calculating the Final Programme Mark and Degree Classification

For the purposes of calculating the final programme mark and degree classification the year of study weighting for a Bachelors of Arts programme is 0:40:60 (see annex 14 for the agreed weightings by programme).

The final programme mark and degree classification is determined by calculating all the year marks (with credit point weighting) as in example 1 section 3 and then applying the primary and secondary rules:

Year 2		Year 3	
<i>Unit Mark</i>	<i>Credit Points</i>	<i>Unit Mark</i>	<i>Credit Points</i>
39.8	20	55.8	20
45.8	20	62.4	20
39.4*	20	58.1	20
42.2	30	57.0	60
41.0	30		
<b>41.633...</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>57.883...</b>	<b>120</b>

\* the unit mark is carried forward even though progression is permitted notwithstanding the failed unit mark.

#### **Application of Primary Rule**

Apply the weighting (0:40:60) to the year marks (not the rounded year marks):

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Year 2} & \quad 40 \times 41.633\dots = 1665.32 \\
 \text{Year 3} & \quad 60 \times 57.883\dots = 3472.98 \\
 \text{All years} & \quad 1665.32 + 3472.98 = 5138.3 / 100 = 51.383
 \end{aligned}$$

Final programme mark is rounded to the nearest integer = **51**

The final programme mark of **51** is not within the classification borderline so the secondary rule is not applied and a 2.2 is awarded.

### EXAMPLE 3 – A student on taught postgraduate MSc programme

#### 1. Calculating the Unit Mark

The summative assessment for notional unit 1 consists of:

- Essay (30%),
- Unseen written exam (40%),
- Practical (30%).

The final unit mark is calculated from the assessment marks (all marked on the 0-100 scale):

Level 7 unit (pass mark 50/100)	Short essay (30%)	Unseen written exam (40%)	Practical (30%)	Total unit mark
<b>Actual score</b>	60	49	59	
<b>Weighted mark</b>	60 x 30 = 1800	49 x 40 = 1960	59 x 30 = 1770	1800+1960+ 1770 = 5530 5530/100 = <b>55.3 (55)</b>

Credit may be awarded for the unit (assuming the student has fulfilled any other criteria), with a mark of 55.3, whilst the rounded mark of 55 is displayed.

(If some assessments are marked on the 0-20 point scale section 20 of the Code explains how to calculate the unit mark).

#### 2. Calculating the Taught Component Mark for the Purposes of Progression

The average 'taught component mark' is calculated by averaging the actual unit marks following weighting according to the credit point value of the units:

	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	Total
	(20cp)	(20cp)	(40cp)	(20cp)	(20cp)	(120cp)
Level of unit (and associated pass mark/100)	7 (50)	6 (40)	7 (50)	7 (50)	7 (50)	
<b>Unit mark</b>	55.3	48.9	49.6	47.6	54.2	
<b>For the award of credit and progression</b>	Pass (55)	Pass (49)	Pass (50)	Fail (48)	Pass (54)	
<b>Weighted mark</b> (corresponding to credit point value)	55.3 x 20 = 1106	48.9 x 20 = 978	49.6 x 40 = 1984	47.6 x 20 = 952	54.2 x 20 = 1084	1106+ 978+ 1984 + 952+ 1084= 6104 6104/120= <b>50.866... (51)*</b>

\* The result is rounded to the nearest integer for progression purposes.

The student has failed Unit 4 (20 credit points) with a mark of 48 while Unit 2 (level 6 with a pass mark of 40) has been passed with a mark of 49. Therefore the progression rule in section 31.12 of the Code may be considered:

- ✓ The volume of credit points failed (20) is within the specified amount permitted (30).
- ✓ The unit mark (48) is within the specified range of the pass mark (45-49).
- ✓ The year mark (51) at or higher than the weighted average pass mark for all the taught units, which in this example is 48.3\* because of the mix of level 6 and 7 units which have different pass marks.

\* the weighted average pass mark is calculated by averaging the pass marks for the units, weighted by volume of credit points, i.e. the sum of the calculation  $(a / b \times c)$  for each unit where  $a$  is the pass mark,  $b$  is the total volume of credit points and  $c$  is the volume of credit points of the unit:  $(50 \times 20) + (40 \times 20) + (50 \times 40) + (50 \times 20) + (50 \times 20) = 5800 / 120 = 48.333...$

- ✓ And meets all other criteria in 31.12 of the Code.

Therefore progression of the student to the dissertation stage is permitted notwithstanding the failed unit mark.

### 3. Calculating the Final Programme Mark and Degree Classification

The final programme mark is calculated by averaging the unit marks following weighting (corresponding to the credit point value):

	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3	UNIT 4	UNIT 5	DISS	Total
	(20cp)	(20cp)	(40cp)	(20cp)	(20cp)	(60cp)	(180cp)
Level of unit (and corresponding pass mark/100)	7 (50)	6 (40)	7 (50)	7 (50)	7 (50)	7 (50)	
Unit mark	55.3	48.9	49.6	47.6	54.2	59.5	
For the award of credit	Pass (55)	Pass (49)	Pass (50)	Fail (48)	Pass (54)	Pass (60)	
Weighted mark (corresponding to credit point value)	55.3 x 20 = 1106	48.9 x 20 = 978	49.6 x 40 = 1984	47.6 x 20 = 952	54.2 x 20 = 1084	59.5 x 60 = 3570	1106+978+1984+952+1084+3570 = 9674/180= 53.744... (54)*

\*The overall programme mark is rounded to the nearest integer and the Master's degree is awarded on the basis of the final programme mark of **54**.

## Annex 14

**Agreed Weightings, by Faculty, to be applied for the Purposes of Calculating the Final Programme Mark and Degree Classification in Undergraduate Programmes**

Faculty	Type of Programme			
	Bachelor's three year honours degree	Bachelor's four year honours degree with a year in Industry or Study Abroad	Integrated four years Master's degree	Integrated four years Master's degree with year in Industry or Study Abroad
Arts	0:40:60	0:30:10:60	-	-
Engineering	0:25:75	0:15:10:75	0:10:40:50	0:15:10:75
Medical and Veterinary Sciences	0:25:75	0:15:10:75	0:10:40:50	0:15:10:75
Science (by school)				
<i>Biological Sciences</i>	0:25:75	-	-	-
<i>Chemistry</i>	0:25:75	0:15:10:75	0:10:40:50	0:15:10:75
<i>Earth Sciences</i>	0:25:75	-	0:10:40:50	0:15:10:75
<i>Experimental Psychology</i>	0:40:60	-	-	-
<i>Geographical Sciences</i>	0:25:75	0:15:10:75	0:10:40:50	0:15:10:75
<i>Mathematics</i>	0:25:75	0:15:10:75	0:10:40:50	0:15:10:75
<i>Physics</i>	0:25:75	0:15:10:75	0:10:40:50	0:15:10:75
Social Sciences and Law (by school)				
<i>Sociology, Politics and International Studies</i>	0:25:75	0:15:10:75	-	-
<i>Policy Studies</i>	0:25:75	0:15:10:75	-	-
<i>Economics, Finance and Management</i>	0:40:60	0:30:10:60	-	-
<i>Law</i>	0:40:60	0:30:10:60	-	-

**Generic Weightings for the Differing Programmes to be applied for the Purposes of Calculating the Final Programme Mark and Degree Classification in Undergraduate Programmes**

Programme	Weighting of years
Aegrotat degree (unclassified)	N/A
Ordinary degree (unclassified)	N/A
Bachelor's honours degree by intercalation	0:0:100
Bachelor's three year honours degree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for subjects where there is an emphasis on the incremental skills, knowledge and understanding that will be accumulated during the programme, the weighting rule gives a significantly higher weighting to the final year.</li> <li>• for subjects in which a more balanced weighting is deemed appropriate with some recognition of progression.</li> </ul>	0:25:75 or 0:40:60
Bachelor's four year honours degree that includes and requires study abroad or in industry (i.e. away from the University) for one academic year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for subjects where there is an emphasis on the incremental skills, knowledge and understanding that will be accumulated during the programme, the weighting rule gives a significantly higher weighting to the final year.</li> <li>• for subjects in which a more balanced weighting is deemed appropriate with some recognition of progression.</li> </ul>	0:15:10:75 or 0:30:10:60
Integrated four year master's degree	0:10:40:50
Integrated four year master's degree that includes and requires study abroad or in industry (i.e. away from the University) for one academic year	0:15:10:75
Integrated five year master's degree that includes and requires study abroad or in industry (i.e. away from the University) for one academic year	0:10:10:30:50
Professional five year undergraduate programmes	N/A

## **Applying recognised prior learning to the calculation of the final programme mark and/or the degree classification in modular undergraduate programmes**

### *Prior Certified Learning*

1. With regard to applications for exemption due to prior certified learning, schools should consider the learning which has been accredited at the other institution and decide, in the best interests of the student, how this may be taken into account. The school has discretion to decide if: (a) the subject content, and therefore knowledge gained, is sufficiently similar for a student to be exempt from unit(s), and (b) whether marks may be transferred.
2. Where a student is exempted from units due to recognition of prior credit from another institution, and these units contribute to the final programme mark and/or degree classification but the marks are not accepted, these unit(s) will not be considered in the algorithm for the purpose of calculating the final mark and the degree classification.
3. If a student is exempted from a year of study (due to recognised prior learning) that would otherwise contribute to the final programme mark and/or the degree classification, but marks have not been transferred, no weighting will be given to the “exempt” year when determining the final programme mark and/or the degree classification. The relevant weighting must be applied, on a *pro rata* basis, to the remaining years of study. For example, if a student is exempt from the second year of study:
  - Bachelor’s three year honours degree: 0:25:75, will become 0:0:100;
  - Integrated four year master’s degree: 0:10:40:50, will become 0:0:45:55.
4. Where a student is exempted from units (due to the recognition of prior learning from another institution) that contribute to the final programme mark and/or degree classification and the marks are accepted by the University, the transferred marks will be ‘converted’ and incorporated into the algorithm for calculating the final programme mark and degree classification.

### *Prior Experiential Learning*

5. Where a student is exempted from units due to the recognition of the non-certified acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge, gained through relevant experience and where these units contribute to degree classification, then these units will not be given any weight in the algorithm when calculating the final mark and the degree classification.



## Dissertations in Taught Postgraduate Programmes

A generic standard for dissertations in taught postgraduate programmes is set out below. Any particular requirements must be set out in programme specifications and in guidance from schools.

Schools may adopt their own requirements based on this generic standard, but they will be subject to annual monitoring and progressive harmonisation at Faculty level.

### Preparation

Schools will provide students with information to enable them to prepare the dissertation and will advise them of the specific requirements and submission deadlines that apply in relevant handbooks or online. Students are expected to attend dissertation workshops/seminars, dissertation units and/or specific sessions with their dissertation supervisor. Students should be given access to good examples of Master's dissertations or dissertation templates while preparing the dissertation.

Students must ensure that their dissertation is their own work and must identify any material which is not their own work by referencing and acknowledgement. The dissertation must NOT incorporate dissertation material which has been used for another degree or plagiarise the work of others.

Group projects: For certain programmes, it is possible for collaborative projects and reports to form part of the dissertation. These collaborative projects and reports must however include individual assessment. This must be made clear in the programme specification and in the guidance provided by the school.

### Content and format of the dissertation

Word length: The normal requirements for the word length of a dissertation are as follows:

- A maximum word count of between **10,000–15,000 words**.
- A dissertation based on laboratory work may have a maximum word count of between **6,000–10,000 words**.

References and lists of contents pages may be additional to the word limit, as can appendices if allowed (although these should be reasonable in length).

If different, the exact requirements for the word length of the dissertation must be specified in the relevant programme specification and communicated to students.

Binding: The dissertation should be presented in a secure, temporary binding, with a glued or spiral spine, e.g. 'perfect binding' and 'spring-back binding'. The University's Print Services (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/printservices/>) can provide this service. Information may be obtained from the relevant School Office.

Sequence: Dissertation material should be organised as follows:

Title Page

Abstract

Dedication and Acknowledgements (if applicable)

Author's Declaration

Table of Contents, Tables and Illustrative Material

Text – chapters, sections and sub-divisions

Appendices – (if any, including media)

List of references/Bibliography

The Title Page, Abstract, Dedication and Acknowledgements (if applicable), Author's Declaration and Table of Contents must be single-sided.

Title page: At the top of the title page, give the title and, if necessary, the sub-title. The full name of the dissertation author should be in the centre of the page. At the bottom centre should be the following words:

*“A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Master of ...(title) by advanced study in ...(programme title) in the Faculty of...(Faculty name)”.*

Under this text, the name of the School and the date that the dissertation was submitted should be provided. The word count must be shown on the title page.

Abstract: Each dissertation copy must include an abstract or summary of the dissertation in not more than 300 words, on one side of A4, which should be single-spaced in font size 10, 11 or 12.

Dedication and acknowledgements are at the discretion of the student.

#### *Author's declaration*

*I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, this work is my own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of others, is indicated as such. I have identified all material in this dissertation which is not my own work through appropriate referencing and acknowledgement. Where I have quoted or otherwise incorporated material which is the work of others, I have included the source in the references. Any views expressed in the dissertation, other than referenced material, are those of the author.*

SIGNED: ..... DATE: .....

*(Signature of student)*

Table of contents, list of tables and illustrative material: The table of contents must list, in sequence and with page numbers, all chapters, sections and sub-sections, the list of references; as well as abbreviations and appendices (if permitted). The list of tables and illustrations should follow the table of contents, listing with page numbers the tables, photographs, diagrams in the order in which they appear in the text.

Appendices: Not all programmes allow appendices as part of the dissertation. If a programme does not allow appendices, the school will ensure that this information is clearly provided to students.

Referencing: General guidance on referencing standards is provided by Library Services (<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/library/support/findinginfo/literature-references/>).

Digital recording media, photocopies and photographs: Appendices may include digital recording media in standard formats and good quality photocopies and photographs as long as such material constitutes the most appropriate method of presenting the information. This material should be clearly labelled and listed in the dissertation's list of illustrative material. Material must not infringe copyright regulations.

Paper: The dissertation must be printed on A4 (210mm x 297mm) white paper. A3 paper may be used for maps, plans, diagrams and illustrative material. Pages should normally be double-sided (except the preliminary 5 pages which must be single-sided).

Page numbering: Pages should be numbered consecutively at the bottom centre of the page (i.e. the title page is page 1), including appendices.

Text: Text should be in double or 1.5 line spacing; the font size should be chosen to ensure clarity and legibility for the main text and any quotations and footnotes e.g. 12pt. Margins should not be less than 40mm at the left hand (binding) side and not less than 15 mm at the top, bottom and side.

### **Submission of the dissertation**

Students should submit **two** printed copies of the dissertation to the school, together with the signed submission form by the required deadline date and time. Students must also submit an electronic copy of their dissertation via Blackboard or via email to the school. Electronic submission of the dissertation enables examiners to check submitted dissertations for plagiarism using plagiarism detection software. One copy will normally be securely stored in the school, in line with data protection guidelines. Students should retain an additional copy of the dissertation in case they are called for an oral examination.

In many schools, the dissertation must be submitted by 12.00 noon on the deadline date. This may, however, vary as the particular details for submission are set by schools using this annex as a guide.

Dissertation submission deadline dates for some part-time and professional programmes may differ from the above deadlines, but they must be clearly stated in school handbooks and enable timely student graduation.

Penalties apply for late submission: See section 24 of the Regulations and Code of Practice. Other than in exceptional circumstances, students must submit their dissertation within the normal study period for the award and in accordance with the programme's requirements and published University deadline dates for submission:

<b>Student mode of attendance</b>	<b>Dissertation submission deadline date</b>	<b>Degree Congregation date (degree conferred if successful)</b>
Full-Time	8 September	January
Part-time	8 September	January
Part-time variable	Normally by the maximum study date.	July/January

### **Dissertation examination**

Dissertations are assessed by two internal examiners (at least one of whom is not the dissertation supervisor). The role of the external examiner is outlined in the University's Policy for the External Examining of Taught Programmes (see annex 8). An Examiner's Report Form is used to give feedback on the dissertation and a final mark. Details are contained in school handbooks. Official notification of the examination result is sent to students following the relevant Board of Examiners.

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