UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX C

University Framework for Full-time and Part-time Modular Postgraduate Programmes

2011-14

Applicable to the following cohorts
2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14

In the Code of Practice on Assessment and all Appendices the term "student"
includes apprentices on degree apprenticeship programmes

CONTENTS

University Framework for Full-time and Part-time Modular Postgraduate Programmes

1.   Introduction

1.1   General Ordinance 42 shall apply to all full-time and part-time Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates available within the University Framework for Full-Time and Part-Time Modular Postgraduate Programmes.

1.2   Students studying on a programme that comes within this framework will register onto an approved programme leading to an award of a Master's Degree, or a Postgraduate Diploma, or a Postgraduate Certificate. Students may only be eligible for an award that is different from that for which they were registered if it is to be an exit award or the student changes their registration.

1.3   In order to be admitted to a module programme of postgraduate study, each candidate must have obtained such prior qualifications and/or experience as shall be determined by or on behalf of the relevant Faculty Management Team. Candidates shall be admitted to a modular programme of postgraduate study only with the approval of the relevant Faculty Management Team.

1.4   All part-time taught postgraduate programmes should fully comply with this framework for all new cohorts commencing from the 2011-12 – 2013-14 academic sessions.

1.5   Within this framework, all programmes of study should be compatible with the following definitions:

(a)   Master's a vocational or non-vocational programme, involving both a substantial piece or pieces of independent work and a range of assessed modules, whose combined challenge reflects the level of further intellectual development appropriate to the equivalent of one year's advanced study beyond Honours degree level. A Master's Degree will provide an appropriate foundation for research degree registration and/or the qualities and transferable skills to enable independent learning required for continuing professional development.

(b)   Postgraduate Diploma – a vocational or non-vocational programme taught and assessed in part at Master's level but not involving a substantial piece of independent work.

(c)   Postgraduate Certificate – a vocational or non-vocational programme taught and assessed in part at Master's level but not involving a substantial piece of independent work and covering a narrower range of material.

(NB "Postgraduate" does not imply all entrants or most entrants are graduates or that their entry qualification is in the same area as the postgraduate programme. It relates to the standard of work required of them at the point of assessment, both in pace and content.)

1.6   The requirements for completion of each programme of study shall be consistent with this framework and shall be approved by the School Scrutiny Panel or University Approval Panel as appropriate and set out in the programme specification.

1.7   Exemptions from this framework should only be granted where clear and demonstrable academic justification for non-conformity has been presented to and approved by the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

2. **Module and Credit Requirements**

2.1 All provision should be modularised; each module must be assessed and given a credit value and an associated level. The form of assessment shall be approved by the School Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the requirements of the programme and module approval processes in place.

2.2 Credit values should be assigned on the basis that 10 hours of student commitment (divided into variable mixes of contact and private study hours) should be allocated 1 credit point.

2.3 Each programme of study shall consist of a number of 'taught' modules which shall each have a value of 5 or 7.5 or 10 or 15 or 20 or 30 or 40 or 45 credit points; it should be noted that it is not required for all 'taught' modules in a programme to have the same credit value, programmes can consist of modules with different credit values.

2.4 The number of credit points attached to a single module dissertation or project shall normally be 60; or there shall be two modules of independent research totalling 60 credits.

2.5 All provision should comply with the following minimum credit requirements:

   (a) A programme of study leading to a Master's award shall:

      (i) require successful completion of at least 180 credits; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to 30 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 30 credits of the Open Languages[1] modules at levels 4, 5 or 6;

      (ii) include research consisting of a single project or dissertation module normally worth 60 credits or two independent research modules totalling 60 credits;

      (iii) include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named/unnamed Postgraduate Diploma upon successfully completing 120 credits; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to 30 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 30 credits of the Open Languages[2] modules at levels 4, 5 or 6; the 120 credits may include dissertation, project or independent research credits;

      (iv) include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named/unnamed Postgraduate Certificate upon successfully completing 60 credits; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to 15 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 15 credits of the Open Languages[3] modules at levels 4, 5 or 6; the 60 credits may not include dissertation, project or independent research credits.

   (b) A programme of study leading to a Postgraduate Diploma shall:

      (i) require successful completion of at least 120 credits from taught modules; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to 30 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 30 credits of the Open Languages[4] modules at levels 4, 5 or 6. A Postgraduate Diploma programme may not include a single 60 credit dissertation or project module among the credit to be achieved; credit achieved on a single 60 credit dissertation or project module, or two independent research modules totalling 60 credits, may only contribute to the award of a Postgraduate Diploma when it is an exit award (see 2.5(a)(iii) above). However,

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[1] The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/
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[3] The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/
[4] The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/

a Postgraduate Diploma may include up to a maximum of 30 credits of independent research;

(ii) include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named/unnamed Postgraduate Certificate upon successfully completing 60 credits; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to 15 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 15 credits of the Open Languages[5] modules at levels 4, 5 or 6.

(c) A programme of study leading to a Postgraduate Certificate shall require successful completion of at least 60 credits from taught modules; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to 15 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 15 credits of the Open Languages[6] modules at levels 4, 5 or 6; the 60 credits may include up to 30 credits of independent research.

Points (a), (b) and (c) above state the minimum requirements and thus allow for the accommodation of programmes where, for example, there is a need to undertake preliminary studies for graduates in non-relevant subjects or a need to include substantial clinical work.

2.6 Where a programme includes FHEQ level 6 modules or Open Languages[7] modules at levels 4, 5 or 6 (as detailed above) that are also available to students on undergraduate degrees of the University, graduates of those undergraduate programmes will not be permitted to repeat in a postgraduate programme, a FHEQ level 6 module or Open Languages[8] modules at levels 4, 5 or 6 they have taken in their undergraduate degree. In such instances, the programme must make suitable alternatives available to the student. Similarly, where a student has taken an FHEQ level 7 module as part of an undergraduate degree they have taken at the University they will not be permitted to take the same FHEQ level 7 module(s) as part of a postgraduate programme of the University; the postgraduate programme must provide a suitable alternative for such students.

2.7 Where two modules, one at FHEQ level 6 and the other at FHEQ level 7, share substantially the same learning and teaching provision but have different assessments, it should not be possible for a student to take both modules. If a student of the University takes one such module in their undergraduate degree, if they go on to take a postgraduate programme, they will not be permitted to take the FHEQ level 7 module that shares substantially the learning and teaching with the FHEQ level 6 module they have already taken. The postgraduate programme that uses such modules must provide suitable alternatives for students to ensure they do not have to repeat the learning and teaching they had in their undergraduate degree.

3. **Awards and Programme Titles**

3.1 The awards of a Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate may be named or unnamed. A named award carries the name of an approved programme of study that the student successfully completed and will indicate the subject or discipline studies (e.g. Postgraduate Certificate in … [subject area]); an unnamed award simply states the level of qualification achieved.

3.2 The default position is that named awards will be given if either:

(a) the student was registered onto the award and has successfully completed the required modules for the award; or

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[5] The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/
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[7] The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/
[8] The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/

(b)   the student was registered onto a higher award (Postgraduate Diploma or Master's) and exits with a lower award having successfully completed the required modules for the exit award.

3.3   The awards of Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate will not carry the name of the programme in the following circumstances:

(a)   the programme has been designed to provide only unnamed exit awards, and this is made clear in the programme documentation; or

(b)   the programme has been designed with named exit awards that are only given upon successful completion of a specific combination of modules within the programme and the student has failed to achieve a Master's award and has failed to pass the specified combination of modules required for a named Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate award but has passed sufficient credit to achieve a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate which shall be awarded without the name of the programme.

4.   Pass Mark and Classification

4.1   All provision will have clearly defined assessments for each module with a pass mark of 50%. If the programme of study includes FHEQ level 6 modules or Open Languages[9] modules at levels 4, 5 or 6 (as detailed in section 2 above) which have a pass mark of 40%, students must achieve 50% or more for the credit to be recognised for a postgraduate award.

4.2   Pass marks and average marks shall be rounded to the nearest whole number. Decimal places less than .5 should be rounded down, decimal places of .5 or above should be rounded up.

4.3   All provision leading to the award of a Master's, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate shall include the following:

(a)   a requirement to achieve a mark of 50% or more in every taught module and in any dissertation, project or independent research modules, **except** that where the average of the total marks in all taught modules is 50% or above, a mark of 40-49% shall be deemed compensatable in **taught modules only** totalling up to 20 credits. Compensation shall not be applied where more than 20 taught credits are failed. It should be noted that the range of compensatable marks for FHEQ level 6 modules shall also be 40-49%;

(b)   provision for a mark of Merit or Distinction to be awarded according to the criteria below, but only where the requirements are achieved at the first attempt. A Merit or Distinction cannot be awarded if a student has failed and then passed on re-assessment any credit that counts towards the final award during the relevant period of study at the University; however marks achieved in modules which are passed under the compensation rule may be counted toward a Merit or Distinction. It should be noted that students who register on a Master's or Postgraduate Diploma but who exit with a lower award, will be eligible for a Merit or Distinction for the lower award, provided the student meets the criteria outlined below:

(i)   For a Master's Degree with **Merit** a student must achieve:
   - a mark of at least 60% for the dissertation, project or independent research modules; and
   - marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
   - an overall average mark of at least 60%.

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[9] The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/

(ii)   For a Postgraduate Diploma with **Merit** a student must achieve:
- marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
- an overall average mark of at least 60%.

(iii) For a Postgraduate Certificate with **Merit** a student must achieve:
- marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
- an overall average mark of at least 60%.

(iv)   For a Master's Degree with **Distinction** a student must achieve:
- a mark of at least 70% for the dissertation, project or independent research modules; and
- marks of at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
- an overall average mark of at least 70%.

(v)   For a Postgraduate Diploma with **Distinction** a student must achieve:
- marks of at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
- an overall average mark of at least 70%.

(vi)   For a Postgraduate Certificate with **Distinction** a student must achieve:
- marks of at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
- an overall average mark of at least 70%.

5.   Programme Structure

5.1   The structure for **full-time** programmes shall be as follows:

(a)   Master's – the full-time period of study leading to a Master's Degree shall be 12 months.

(b)   Postgraduate Diploma – the full-time period of study leading to a Postgraduate Diploma shall be 30 weeks.

(c)   Postgraduate Certificate – the full-time period of study leading to a Postgraduate Certificate shall be 15 weeks.

(d)   For the Master's Degree and the Postgraduate Diploma the 'taught' modules should normally be divided equally between the two semesters, i.e. they should normally take taught modules totalling 60 credits in each semester. However, programmes may be designed with imbalances of up to 15 taught credits between semesters, e.g. 52.5 credits in semester one and 67.5 credits in semester two. Any proposal for a programme to be designed with a greater imbalance of workload (up to 30 taught credits difference between the two semesters) will require specific permission from the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. Such permission will only be given in exceptional circumstances on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory rationale. In exceptional circumstances, individual students may be allowed to choose options in their programme of studies which would result in an imbalance of up to 30 taught credits, e.g. 45 credits in semester one and 75 credits in semester two. Such choices require the specific permission of the Programme Leader/Director of Studies for the programme and a student choosing such a pattern of study must be made aware that the fact of uneven workload will not be regarded as an extenuating factor in the case of failure in assessment.

(e)   All provision should be semesterised. Programmes may be designed to begin at the start of any semester and may have intakes annually, at the beginning of every semester or less frequently than annually.

(f)   Dissertations or projects or independent research module assessments shall be submitted by 15th September (or the next working day if this date falls on a weekend) following the final semester of attendance in respect of taught modules.

(g)   Where a student is required to re-sit or re-take failed assessments, the Board of Examiners shall grant an automatic extension for the submission of the dissertation to 15th December next (or the next working day if this date falls on a weekend), if:
i.   the board of Examiners has accepted extenuating circumstances in relation to the failed module(s); or
ii. the failure relates to modules totalling 30 credits or more, without extenuating circumstances.

5.2   All **part-time** programmes of study should be structured over a fixed period as detailed below.

(a)   Master's – a programme of study leading to a Master's award should be designed to be completed over a fixed period up to a maximum of 3 years; this is the length of the programme and must be clearly stated in the programme specification. The maximum registration period for a part-time Master's programme is 6 years and this includes any periods of suspension of studies. This registration period is to allow for students with exceptional circumstances who cannot complete during the approved length of the programme, which cannot exceed 3 years.

(b)   Postgraduate Diploma – a programme of study leading to a Postgraduate Diploma award should be designed to be completed over a fixed period up to a maximum of 2 years; this is the length of the programme and must be clearly stated in the programme specification. The maximum registration period for a part-time Postgraduate Diploma programme is 5 years and this includes any periods of suspension of studies. This registration period is to allow for students with exceptional circumstances who cannot complete during the approved length of the programme, which cannot exceed 2 years.

(c)   Postgraduate Certificate – a programme of study leading to a Postgraduate Certificate award should be designed to be completed over a fixed period up to a maximum of 1 year; this is the length of the programme and must be clearly stated in the programme specification. The maximum registration period for a part-time Postgraduate Certificate is 3 years and this includes any periods of suspension of studies. This registration period is to allow for students with exceptional circumstances who cannot complete during the approved length of the programme, which cannot exceed 1 year.

(d)   Where possible all programmes, whether leading to a Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate, should be semesterised. Programmes may be designed to begin at the start of any semester and may have intakes annually, at the beginning of every semester or less frequently than annually.

(e)   Dissertations or projects or independent research module assessments shall be submitted by 15th September (or the next working day if this date falls on a weekend) following the final semester of attendance in respect of taught modules.

(f)   Where a student is required to re-sit or re-take failed assessments, the Board of Examiners shall grant an automatic extension for the submission of the dissertation to 15th March next (or the next working day if this date falls on a weekend), if:
i.   the board of Examiners has accepted extenuating circumstances in relation to the failed module(s); or
ii. the failure relates to modules totalling 30 credits or more, without extenuating circumstances.

5.3   Students who exit with a Postgraduate Diploma or a Postgraduate Certificate, having been registered on a higher award, will achieve the appropriate exit award for credit achieved over the

registration period of the programme on which they were registered, as stated in the programme specification.

5.4   All **part-time** programmes should normally be designed such that the spread of credit is evenly distributed across the years of study.

5.5   Where students select optional modules that will lead to an imbalance in workload, the selection must be approved by the Programme Leader/Director of Studies and the student must be made aware that the fact of the uneven workload will not be regarded as an extenuating factor in the case of failure in assessments.

6.   Late registration on modules or programmes

6.1   The decision to accept a student onto a module once teaching has started on it must be based on the academic judgement of the module coordinator/convenor to ensure that the student registering late on the module will not be disadvantaged in respect of opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes, in-session coursework deadlines and learning contexts such as group work. Normally transfer into or out of a module will not be allowed after two weeks from the commencement of teaching. Transfers will also only be allowed if the timetable can accommodate the revised module combination. If such a transfer would result in a credit imbalance across semesters 1 and 2, the approval of the Programme Leader/Director of Studies must be secured as detailed in paragraph 5.5 above and the student must be made aware of the fact that the uneven workload will not be regarded as an extenuating factor in the case of failure in assessments.

6.2   The decision to accept a student onto a programme once teaching has started on it must be based on the academic judgement of the Programme Leader/Director of Studies, in consultation with the relevant module coordinators, to ensure that the student registering late on the programme will not be disadvantaged in respect of opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes, in-session coursework deadlines and learning contexts such as group work. Normally late registration onto a programme will not be allowed after two weeks from the commencement of teaching on the programme.

6.3   A student will be deemed to be "restarting" a module or programme if they have previously registered for the module or programme, withdrawn and then opted to start that module or programme again within the period allowed for late registration as indicated in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2 above. Any work that the student had submitted for assessment during their previous registration on the module or programme would be disregarded and therefore all assessment tasks would be submitted as if for the first time. Students should be aware that resubmission of assessment tasks by a student restarting a module or programme does not guarantee that the same provisional mark will be awarded for the task(s).

7.   <u>Re-assessment</u>

7.1   Candidates who are registered onto a programme of study leading to an award and fail one or more modules at the first attempt shall be permitted to present themselves for re-assessment in the failed assessment component(s) for each failed module on one further occasion during the maximum registration period. Re-assessment in 'taught' modules should normally take place at the next re-assessment opportunity and within 12 months of the failed assessment. If a student is permitted to replace a discontinued or unavailable module with a new module to substitute a module not previously attempted for a failed module, the mark for the new module would be capped, except where the mark for the original was deemed to have been affected by extenuating circumstances. Re-assessment in research and independent study modules will normally take place within 12 months of the publication of results (see 7.15 (v)).

7.2   Whenever an examination/assessment is reassessed, the mark achieved in the re-assessment always supersedes any earlier mark, <u>even when the earlier mark is </u>higher. Following re-sit/re-

take examinations/assessments the mark recorded for a module will be the weighted average of the final marks achieved for each component of the assessment of the module. (The marks of any assessment components of a module which have been passed at the first attempt will be carried forward and used with the actual marks gained in the re-sits/re-takes of the failed components to calculate the overall module mark.) This actual mark will be recorded but will be flagged in the student record system as having been obtained following a second or subsequent sitting of an examination or assessment, **except**:

(i) where marks in the range 45-49% meet the criteria for compensation. In these circumstances, the marks will be raised to 50% in the student record system but will be flagged as having been achieved at a second attempt; or

(ii) where the Board of Examiners (or, where appropriate, the Faculty Progress Committee in determining a student's appeal) has determined, as a result of a student's ill-health or other extenuating circumstances, that the re-sit/re-take should be treated as a first examination/assessment. In these circumstances the mark achieved in the re-sit/re-take examination/assessment will not be flagged. Examiners must clearly identify to the Student Administration and Support Division when this is the case.

Module marks achieved through re-assessment will be capped at 50% for the purposes of calculating the overall average mark and determining classification for an award; the actual mark achieved through re-assessment will be the mark recorded on the transcript.

7.3 For candidates who are permitted to present themselves for re-assessment in research and independent study modules, the Board of Examiners shall determine whether they should do so either:

(a) As re-taking the module with attendance with full supervision. The Board of Examiners shall ensure that the student is given clear guidance on whether or not the retake should be on a new topic; or

(b) As re-sitting the module without attendance. The Board of Examiners shall ensure that the student is given clear guidance as to the level of supervision which they can expect; it is anticipated that this requires no attendance on campus and no face-to-face meetings with supervisors or no registration on an online module and that the student is not required to make a submission on a new topic. The student shall be provided with formative written feedback on their first attempt submission; or

(c) As re-sitting the module with partial supervision. The Board of Examiners shall ensure that the student is given clear guidance as to the level of supervision which they can expect; it is anticipated that this requires no attendance on campus and no face-to-face meetings with supervisors or no registration on an online module and that the student shall not normally be required to make a submission on a substantially new topic. The Board of Examiners shall ensure that the student is provided with formative written feedback on their first attempt submission and given clear guidance as to the level of supervision which they can expect.

7.4 For candidates who register for individual modules on a standalone basis there shall be no compensation for any modules that are narrowly failed (see 5.2 above); if such candidates fail one or more modules they can either:

(i) present themselves for re-assessment in the failed assessment component(s) at the next re-assessment opportunity. Candidates may be re-assessed in any failed assessment components, and normally will not be limited as to the number of opportunities for re-assessment while the module continues to be delivered by the University. However, only credit from failed modules that are passed at the first re-assessment attempt may be counted towards an award. Marks achieved through re-assessment will be capped at 50% for the purposes of calculating the overall average mark and determining classification for

an award; the actual and latest mark achieved through re-assessment will be the mark recorded on the transcript; or

(ii)   re-register for and re-take the whole module; all marks achieved will replace all previously achieved marks but shall be flagged on the transcript to indicate that the module has been taken previously. Should the candidate subsequently wish to use the credit from such a module towards an award they must pass the re-taken module at the first attempt and the marks will be capped at 50% for the purposes of calculating the overall average mark and determining classification; or

(iii)   take another module in its place; the mark for this module will be recorded as the actual mark and will not be capped.

7.5   In the absence of any extenuating circumstances[10], candidates will not normally be permitted a re-assessment opportunity to improve the mark for any module they have passed.

8.   Recognised Prior Learning

All programmes of study will permit entry with credit attributed to previous certificated study up to a total of one third of the credits required to be awarded a Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate.

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General Ordinance for Modular Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates

1.   The General Ordinance shall apply to all full-time and part-time Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates available within the University Framework for Full-Time and Part-Time Modular Postgraduate Programmes.

2.   In order to be admitted to a modular programme of postgraduate study, each student must have obtained such prior qualifications and/or experience as shall be determined under the PGT Regulations. Students who accumulate relevant certificated credits arising from previous study, may be permitted to transfer such credits upon entry to the programme, provided that such credits shall not normally amount to a total of more than one third of the credits required for the award of a Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate.

3.   The programme of study shall consist of a number of modules which each have a value of 5, 7.5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40 or 45 credit points. The number of credit points attached to a dissertation or project shall normally be 60 or there shall be two modules of independent research totalling 60 credits.

4.   In order to be eligible for an award the maximum period of registration for completing a part-time Master's Degree shall be 6 years; for a Postgraduate Diploma it shall be 5 years; and for a Postgraduate Certificate it shall be 3 years. Subject to these limits, the period of registration for completing a part-time Master's, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate shall be for a fixed period as approved for each programme of study leading to such an award. The maximum fixed period for a programme that may be approved for a Master's degree shall be 3 years, for a Postgraduate Diploma it shall be 2 years; and for a Postgraduate Certificate it shall be 1 year.

5.   For full-time Master's Degrees and Postgraduate Diplomas taught modules should normally be divided equally between the two semesters, i.e. they should normally take taught modules totalling 60 credits in each semester. However, programmes may be designed with imbalances

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[10] Please see the Policy on Extenuating Circumstances in Relation to Performance in Assessments and Examinations, Appendix M to the Code of Practice on Assessment for further information about extenuating circumstances.

of up to 15 credits between semesters, e.g. 52.5 credits in semester one and 67.5 credits in semester two. Any proposal for a programme to be designed with a greater imbalance of workload (up to 30 taught credits difference between the two semesters) will require specific permission from the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. Such permission will only be given in exceptional circumstances on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory rationale. In exceptional circumstances, individual students may be allowed to choose options in their programme of studies which would result in an imbalance of up to 30 taught credits, e.g. 45 credits in semester one and 75 credits in semester two. Such choices require the specific permission of the Director of Studies for the programme and a student choosing such a pattern of study must be made aware that the fact of the uneven workload will not be regarded as an extenuating factor in the case of failure in assessments and consequent failure to progress to the next year of study.

6. Students who attend for a minimum period of 12 months full-time study, or an approved period of part-time study, and who achieve the required amount of credit, as specified in the programme regulations (normally 180 credits), will be eligible for the award of a Master's Degree. Students who attend for a minimum period of 30 weeks of full-time study, or for an approved period of part-time study, and who achieve a minimum of 120 credit points, will be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma. Students who attend for a minimum period of 15 weeks of full-time study or for an approved period of part-time study, and who achieve a minimum of 60 credit points will be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate. To qualify for an award, the student shall obtain all credits within the requirements of an approved programme of study except as provided for in clause 2 above.

7. Students shall be assessed in each module or combination of modules as shall be determined by the PGT Regulations and the requirements of the appropriate approved programme, as stated in the programme specification. Students who fail taught modules may be re-assessed in those modules on one further occasion only. A failed dissertation or project or independent research modules may also be re-submitted on one further occasion only. For full-time and part-time students the dissertation or project or the independent research assessments must be re-submitted within one year of the original date of first submission.

8. No candidate shall be eligible for an award later than six years following the date of initial registration. Full time students should normally complete within one year.

9. Students planning to undertake laboratory/field based research for their dissertation, project or independent research modules who have failed key taught components and as a result are deemed, by the Board of Examiners, to be at risk to themselves and others, may be prevented from progressing to the dissertation, project or independent research modules, following University approval of a recommendation from the Board of Examiners, until the relevant taught components are re-assessed and passed. In these cases the submission date of the dissertation, project or independent research modules shall be extended to 15th December (or the next working day if this date falls on a weekend).

10. The Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate may be awarded with a mark of Merit or Distinction to candidates as follows. A Merit or Distinction cannot be awarded if a candidate has failed and then passed on re-assessment any credit that counts towards the final award during the relevant period of study at the University, however marks achieved in modules which are passed under the compensation rule may be counted toward a Merit or Distinction. It should be noted that students who register on a Master's Degree or Postgraduate Diploma but who exit with a lower award, will be eligible for a Merit or Distinction for the lower award, provided the student meets the criteria outlined below:

(i) For a Master's Degree with **Merit** a student must achieve:
- a mark of at least 60% for the dissertation or project or independent research modules; and
- marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
- an overall average mark of at least 60%.

(ii)   For a Postgraduate Diploma with **Merit** a student must achieve:
- marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
- an overall average mark of at least 60%.

(iii)   For a Postgraduate Certificate with **Merit** a student must achieve
- marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
- an overall average mark of at least 60%.

(iv)   For a Master's Degree with **Distinction** a student must achieve:
- a mark of at least 70% for the dissertation or project or independent research modules; and
- marks of at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
- an overall average mark of at least 70%.

(v)   For a Postgraduate Diploma with **Distinction** a student must achieve:
- marks of at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
- an overall average mark of at least 70%.

(vi)   For a Postgraduate Certificate with **Distinction** a student must achieve
- marks of at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
- an overall average mark of at least 70%.

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