

# Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Postgraduate Master's Programmes

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 These Regulations apply to the following University of Southampton postgraduate awards:
- Master of Arts (MA)
  - Master of Music (MMus)
  - Master of Science (MSc)
  - Master of Science in the Social Sciences (MSc (Social Science))
  - Master of Business Administration (MBA)
  - Master of Public Administration (MPA)
  - Master of Public Administration (Practice) (MPA (Practice))
  - Master of Nursing (MNurs)
  - Master of Laws (LLM)
  - Master of Research (MRes)
  - Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)
  - Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)
  - Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- 1.2 Any approved variations and exemptions to these Regulations are specified in the Programme Regulations in the University Calendar (see Section 10).
- 1.3 Integrated Master's are covered by the [Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Undergraduate and Integrated Masters Programmes](#).
- 1.4 The Regulations should be read in conjunction with the [Regulations and Definitions Applying to Progression for all Credit-Bearing Programmes](#). Defined terms are capitalised in the Regulations.
- 1.5 In the case of part-time programmes the Regulations, including provision for Compensation and Referral, apply for the programme as a whole and not for each academic year over which the programme is taken.
- 1.6 A Board of Examiners, on the recommendation of a Special Considerations Board, has the authority to apply a variation to aspects of these Regulations where a student has exceptional circumstances as defined in the [Regulations Governing Special Considerations \(including Deadline Extension Requests\) for all Taught Programmes and Taught Assessed Components of Research Degrees](#). Detailed guidance is given in the [Quality Handbook](#).

## 2. Programme Structure

- 2.1 Postgraduate master's programmes are constructed from Modules, the majority of which are set at level 7 in the [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#). However, some study may be at other levels as permitted by the [Credit Accumulation and Transfer \(CAT\) Scheme](#). A detailed programme structure will be provided in the Programme Specification.
- 2.2 A Pass in a Module, including a Pass by Compensation, leads to the award of the Credit associated with the Module.

- 2.3 Postgraduate master's programmes typically consist of a taught element made up from a defined number of Modules and an independent study element normally consisting of a dissertation. For programmes where the independent study element is assessed by means other than a dissertation, specific guidance will be given in the Programme Regulations in the University Calendar or the Programme Specification. The dissertation module/independent study element is Core.

### 3. Passing a Module

- 3.1 Where a numerical mark is awarded, the Module Pass Mark for students on postgraduate master's programmes is 50. Some Modules are marked only as Pass or Fail.
- 3.2 Where a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requires a Pass Mark that is higher than the University standard Module Pass Mark, this will be stated in the Programme Regulations in the University Calendar.

### 4. Compensation

- 4.1 A Pass by Compensation may be given in a non-Core Module when a student has:
- i. achieved or exceeded the Average Mark of 50 for the taught part of the programme; and
  - ii. achieved the Qualifying Mark in that non-Core Module.
- 4.2 The standard Qualifying Mark for Modules on postgraduate master's programmes is 35. Where a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requires a Qualifying Mark that is higher than the University standard Qualifying Mark, this will be stated in the Programme Regulations in the University Calendar.
- 4.3 A Pass by Compensation can only be given in a limited number of Credits as follows:
- i. A Pass by Compensation can be given in taught Modules totalling at most 15 ECTS (30 CATS) Credits for a Master's programme or Postgraduate Diploma, and totalling at most 10 ECTS (20 CATS) Credits for a Postgraduate Certificate, except that:
  - ii. In programmes with a minimum Module size of 10 ECTS (20 CATS) Credits, a Pass by Compensation can be given in taught Modules totalling at most 20 ECTS (40 CATS) Credits for a Master's programme or Postgraduate Diploma, and totalling at most 10 ECTS (20 CATS) Credits for a Postgraduate Certificate.
- 4.4 The Compensation criteria apply at both the first and Referral attempts.
- 4.5 The compensated mark will not be raised to the Module Pass Mark, but full Credit will be awarded for the Module. The Module Mark awarded will be included in the student's classification calculation, where applicable.
- 4.6 A student will not be required or permitted to Refer in a Module once the Board of Examiners awards a Pass by Compensation in that Module.
- 4.7 Where a student fails more Modules than can be Passed by Compensation, the student can select which Modules to Refer, with the constraint that Core Modules and all Modules in which the mark obtained is less than the Qualifying Mark must be Referred.

### 5. Referral

- 5.1 A student who fails a taught Module, after the application of Compensation, may take Referral assessments in failed taught Modules totalling at most 15 ECTS (30 CATS) Credits, subject to the following exemptions:

- i. For programmes with a minimal Module size of 10 ECTS (20 CATS) Credits, a student who fails a taught Module, after the application of Compensation, may take Referral assessments in failed taught Modules totalling at most 20 ECTS (40 CATS) Credits.
  - ii. For programmes where all Modules are Core and where it is specified in the Programme Regulations in the University Calendar, the student may take Referral assessments in failed taught Modules totalling at most 30 ECTS (60 CATS) Credits.
- 5.2 The mark obtained at Referral will be Capped at the Module Pass Mark.
- 5.3 The Capped Mark achieved at Referral will be used for calculating the Final Average Mark and determining award eligibility and final classification, where applicable.
- 5.4 Where a student is undertaking their programme through part time study, it may be in the student's best interests to take Referrals at the earliest opportunity, which may be outside the normal assessment periods. For such students, Referrals may be permitted while they are still completing their other taught Modules. The arrangements will be communicated via the Programme Handbook.

## 6. Repeat

- 6.1 A student who has not passed at the first attempt or is not eligible to Refer, or who has Referred and not passed, may Repeat the taught part of the programme Internally or Externally as chosen by the student following academic advice from within the School.
- 6.2 Students choosing an External Repeat should ensure they are aware of the constraints related to dissertation completion as specified in Section 7 of these Regulations.
- 6.3 Paragraph 3 of the [Regulations and Definitions Applying to Progression for all Credit-Bearing Programmes](#) should be consulted regarding the right to Repeat for students sponsored by the University to enter the UK under the points-based visa system.
- 6.4 Internal Repeat: An Internal Repeat will consist of all taught Modules, including those passed at the first attempt. Marks for Modules in which the Pass Mark was not obtained at the first attempt will be Capped at the Pass Mark; for all other Modules the actual mark obtained at Repeat will be used to calculate the Final Average Mark.
- 6.5 External Repeat: An External Repeat will include only those taught Modules in which the Pass Mark was not obtained at the first attempt or at Referral. Existing Module Marks for Modules not Repeated will be used to calculate the Final Average Mark. Marks for Modules taken at External Repeat will be Capped at the Pass Mark to calculate the Final Average Mark.
- 6.6 The Pass criteria for a student Repeating are the same as for the first attempt excluding the right of the Referral. The taught part of a programme may be Repeated only once. Should a student Fail the Repeated Modules, their registration with the University will end. The student will be provided with a record of any Modules passed and an exit award if eligible.
- 6.7 Where a student is undertaking their programme through part time study, it may be in the student's best interests to Repeat Modules at the earliest opportunity, which may be outside of the normal assessment periods. For such students, Repeats may be permitted while they are still completing their other taught Modules and Referrals. The arrangements will be communicated via the Programme Handbook.

## 7. Dissertation

- 7.1 The dissertation is not considered to be a taught Module and Compensation, Referral and Repeat are not applicable.
- 7.2 The Pass Mark for the dissertation is 50.
- 7.3 A student failing to achieve the Pass Mark may submit a revised dissertation on the same subject on one occasion only.

- 7.4 A student revising their dissertation will be given three months from the date the outcome of the Board of Examiners is published, to revise and resubmit their dissertation. If deemed appropriate by the Board of Examiners, a student revising their dissertation may be allowed access to facilities and/or resources for practical work during this time.
- 7.5 A student revising their dissertation will have access to two instances of supervision:
- i. The student will receive detailed written feedback on the failed dissertation and the improvements required. The student should also have the opportunity to meet with their supervisor to discuss the improvements required.
  - ii. Before submission of the revised dissertation, the student will receive feedback on the revisions made.
- 7.6 The mark for a revised dissertation will be Capped at the Pass Mark.
- 7.7 No Internal or External Repeat of the dissertation Module is allowed.
- 7.8 The dissertation Module can only be undertaken as an internal student. If a student has not passed sufficient taught Modules at the first attempt such that they will need to Repeat the taught part of their programme to achieve the award, they can choose one of the following options following academic advice from within the School:
- i. The student can choose to undertake and submit the dissertation and then Repeat the taught part of their programme Internally or Externally. If the student fails the dissertation submission, the student will be allowed to submit a revised dissertation on the same subject on one occasion only as described under paragraphs 7.3 to 7.6. No Repeat of the dissertation allowed.
  - ii. The student can choose to stop undertaking any work on the dissertation and Repeat the taught part of the programme Internally. Following successful completion of the taught Modules, the student can then complete and submit the dissertation. If the student fails the dissertation, the student will be allowed to submit a revised dissertation on the same subject on one occasion only as described under paragraphs 7.3 to 7.6. No Repeat of the dissertation allowed.

## 8. Award Requirements

- 8.1 When students have accumulated sufficient Credits, as described under paragraphs 8.2 to 8.4, they become eligible for an award of the University.
- 8.2 Master's Degree (See list of awards in 1.1)  
To be considered for a Master's degree a student must pass a minimum of 90 ECTS (180 CATS) Credits and achieve a Final Average Mark of 50 or above.
- 8.3 Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)  
To be considered for a Postgraduate Diploma a student must pass a minimum of 60 ECTS (120 CATS) Credits and achieve a Final Average Mark of 50 or above.
- 8.4 Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert/PGCE)  
To be considered for a Postgraduate Certificate a student must pass a minimum of 30 ECTS (60 CATS) Credits and achieve a Final Average Mark of 50 or above.
- 8.5 If a student is unable to achieve their intended award having taken all permissible reassessment opportunities, the University will make an exit award, if permitted by the Programme Specification, based on the Credits the student has achieved.

## 9. Classification of Awards

- 9.1 Some awards are classified. The classification bands for Master's and Postgraduate Diploma awards are set out in the table below. These boundaries refer to the Final Average Mark rounded to the nearest integer.

Overall Average Mark	Postgraduate awards
70 and above	Distinction
60-69	Merit
50-59	Pass
Below 50	Fail

### 9.2 Master's Degree

9.2.1 A student will be awarded a Master's degree with distinction if:

- i. a minimum of 90 ECTS (180 CATS) Credits has been achieved and the Final Average Mark is 69.5 or above, OR
- ii. a minimum of 90 ECTS (180 CATS) Credits has been achieved and the Final Average Mark is between 68 and 69.4, and at least 50% of the Credits are at 70 or above.

9.2.2 A student will be awarded a Master's degree with merit if:

- i. a minimum of 90 ECTS (180 CATS) Credits has been achieved and the Final Average Mark is between 59.5 and 69.4, OR
- ii. a minimum of 90 ECTS (180 CATS) Credits has been achieved and the Final Average Mark is between 58 and 59.4, and at least 50% of the Credits are at 60 or above.

9.2.3 A student will be awarded a Master's degree if a minimum of 90 ECTS (180 CATS) Credits has been achieved and the Final Average Mark is 50 or above, but the requirements for distinction or merit are not met.

### 9.3 Postgraduate Diploma

9.3.1 A student will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma with distinction if:

- i. a minimum of 60 ECTS (120 CATS) Credits has been achieved and the Final Average Mark of the best 60 ECTS (120 CATS) Credits is 69.5 or above, OR
- ii. a minimum of 60 ECTS (120 CATS) Credits has been achieved and the Final Average Mark of the best 60 ECTS (120 CATS) Credits is between 68 and 69.4, and at least 50% of the Credits are at 70 or above.

9.3.2 A student will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma with merit if:

- i. a minimum of 60 ECTS (120 CATS) Credits has been achieved and the Final Average Mark of the best 60 ECTS (120 CATS) Credits is between 59.5 and 69.4, OR
- ii. a minimum of 60 ECTS (120 CATS) Credits has been achieved and the Final Average Mark of the best 60 ECTS (120 CATS) Credits is between 58 or 59.4, and at least 50% of the Credits are at 60 or above.

9.3.3 A student will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma if a minimum of 60 ECTS (120 CATS) Credits has been achieved and the Final Average Mark of the best 60 ECTS (120 CATS) Credits is between 50 or above, but the requirements for distinction or merit are not met.

### 9.4 Postgraduate Certificate

There is no classification for a Postgraduate Certificate regardless of whether it is a standalone award or an exit award.

#### 9.5 Study Abroad/Exchange Students

For programmes involving a period of study outside the UK, unless the programme has an approved translation of marks scheme, a student's classification will be calculated solely on marks obtained in Modules studied at the University of Southampton. Please refer to the [Quality Handbook](#) for the Translation of Marks/Transfer of Credit Policy.

## 10. Variations and Exemptions

10.1 Some programmes may require variations to the Regulations, for example to meet Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements or the requirements of legislation in another country for a programme delivered under the University's collaborative provision policy. Approved variations to the Regulations will be stated in the relevant Programme Regulations in the University Calendar. In order to maintain oversight, Academic Quality and Standards Committee will review all variations on an annual basis for compliance with the criteria.

10.2 With the approval of Academic Quality and Standards Committee, some programmes may operate an exemption from the Regulations. Approved exemptions will be stated in the relevant Programme Regulations in the University Calendar.

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*Replaces the Progression, Determination and Classification of Results: Standalone Masters Programmes for new students starting in 2018-19*