



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

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PART A POLICY AND PRINCIPLES

1.0 General provision for assessment and awards

- 1.1 The authority for approving programmes and granting awards rests with the Senate of Queen Margaret University. Senate is also responsible for maintaining the academic standards of these awards. One of the major mechanisms for the assurance of academic standards is the assessment of students. These regulations provide the structure within which students shall be assessed and whereby their assessment contributes to the achievement of the award.
- 1.2 These General Assessment Regulations shall govern all taught programmes which lead to a University award except where Senate shall determine otherwise.
- 1.3 Each student is enrolled on a programme and is subject to the regulations of that programme, which in its turn is subject to the University's overall policy and regulations.
- 1.4 Students are subject to registration periods which stipulate the minimum and maximum periods that they may be registered on a programme. These are detailed in the University's [Registration Regulations](#).
- 1.5 An award will be conferred upon satisfaction of the following conditions:
- the candidate was a registered student of the University at the time of his or her assessment and has fulfilled all financial obligations to the University;
 - the candidate has completed a programme approved by the University as leading to the award being recommended;
 - the award has been recommended by a Board of Examiners convened, constituted and acting under regulations approved by Senate.
- 1.6 Senate is the ultimate authority in the University for the ratification of academic decisions and may, in extreme circumstances over-rule a Board of Examiners. It will normally refer matters of concern back to the Board of Examiners for reconsideration.

- 1.7 Acting within the above principles, a Board of Examiners will exercise its judgement in reaching decisions on individual candidates. It is responsible for interpreting the assessment regulations for the programme, in the light of the University's requirements and good practice in higher education and its academic judgement should not lightly be questioned or overturned.
- 1.8 Appeals by students against the decisions of Boards of Examiners shall be subject to University procedures and practices, as set out in section of the Governance and Regulations dealing with Academic Appeals and Student Complaints and published on the University's [Quality website](#).

2.0 Context

- 2.1 The Student Experience Strategy is the key strategy for the delivery of taught programmes of study at QMU and this assessment policy should be read in conjunction with that Strategy.
- 2.2 Assessment is integral to the design of programmes of study leading to the award of academic credit and to the award of degrees and diplomas. Programme content is specified through regulations governing Programme Development, Modification, Monitoring and Review. In particular, the learning outcomes and assessment strategy for any programme are defined by a Programme Specification.
- 2.3 Assessment is the process of forming a judgment about the quality and extent of learning in relation to the intended learning outcomes of a student's programme of study. In view of the variety of programmes, it is recognised that there is a need for a variety of forms of assessment, which should reflect the aims of that programme of study and the mode of study. Whatever the type of assessment, it should be fair, valid, reliable, useful and transparent.
- 2.4 In addition to its role in relation to the maintenance of academic standards, an equally important function of assessment is to develop effective student learning. In this context it is essential that assessment is both integrated into the learning experience and that it motivates the learner.

3.0 Purpose of assessment

3.1 Assessment satisfies a number of related requirements, namely that it:

- is integrated with the process of student learning;
- demonstrates that a student has achieved the learning outcomes for their programme of study;
- justifies the award of academic credit based on actual student achievement
- provides confidence in the maintenance of academic standards both internally and to external stakeholders;
- supports the evaluation and enhancement of programme design and delivery;
- provides meaningful feedback to students on their performance on a programme of study which promotes learning;
- provides meaningful information to employers, PSRBs and other organisations on the knowledge and competencies of a graduate;
- supports the enhancement of programme design and programme delivery.

3.2 Additionally, assessment may be used as a diagnostic tool to determine the current knowledge and skills of a student and to assist in the formulation of a programme of future study.

4.0 Principles of assessment

4.1 Assessment regulations establish a framework for the conduct of assessment across all taught programmes. This framework of assessment regulations will specify the extent of local interpretation at School level and in support of specific programme requirements.

4.2 Assessment regulations will establish sound procedures for the advanced communication of assessment requirements (including assessment criteria), the submission, conduct of examinations, marking and moderation of assessments, the progression of students, the remediation of failure and the conduct of meetings of Boards of Examiners. The regulations will ensure that academic standards are maintained and that there is a retention schedule for copies of assessments and feedback on assessments.

4.3 Assessment regulations will be reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

- 4.4 As part of the procedures for the validation and review of awards, programme teams are required to develop an assessment strategy which demonstrates a close alignment with the full range of intended learning outcomes (including knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, practical skills and transferable skills) and mode(s) of study of that programme, including the requirements of professional and statutory bodies.
- 4.5 Programme assessment strategies will be designed to assess all intended learning outcomes but should reduce the level of assessment to the minimum required to demonstrate the above and should avoid duplication.
- 4.6 QMU is committed to principles of best practice in assessment, as established by the QAA Quality Code, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning.
- 4.7 QMU is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and assessment regulations and procedures will be designed such that they actively promote equality of opportunity, irrespective of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion and belief.
- 4.8 QMU subscribes to the principle of anonymous marking, wherever this is practicable.
- 4.9 QMU supports the principles of the award of credit and of credit transfer, as specified by the SCQF, in all of its assessment procedures.
- 4.10 QMU supports the recognition of, and the award of credit for, prior learning.
- 4.11 QMU recognises the need for transparency in the assessment of students.
- 4.12 QMU recognises the need for a detailed student transcript, in accordance with the European Diploma Supplement and the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR), as a means of communicating the broad range of formal and informal learning achieved by a student.
- 4.13 All modules which are designed to lead to the award of academic credit will be expressed in terms of learning outcomes that are capable of assessment and will include details of the assessment and of the assessment criteria to be

employed.

- 4.14 All modules which lead to the award of academic credit will come under the purview of a Board of Examiners and will be assigned as appropriate to an External Examiner.
- 4.15 The normal language of assessment is English, but exceptionally other languages may be used where this is described as part of the definitive document for a programme and, in these cases, the language of instruction and assessment will be clearly shown on the students' transcript.
- 4.16 Programme Specifications will specify the format of assessment but, as a minimum requirement, QMU requires a student to submit a digital copy of all assessments, wherever this is practicable and this digital copy will act as the archive copy of that assessment.

4.17 Feedback

Staff must make every effort to meet the QMU requirement of disseminating assessment marks and feedback to students within the following timeframe:

- Undergraduate level one and two assessment: within a maximum of 20 working days of the assessment submission.
- Undergraduate level three and four assessment (with the exception of Honours projects and dissertations): within a maximum of 15 working days of the assessment submission.
- Undergraduate Honours projects and dissertations: within a maximum of 20 working days of the assessment submission.
- Postgraduate assessment: within a maximum of 20 working days of the assessment submission.

Working days equates to Monday to Friday, excluding University closure days. The maximum of 15/20 working days includes all stages within the marking process and applies to all staff. Only in exceptional circumstances should staff exceed the 15/20 working days requirement. Where this occurs, students must be informed of the extension at least one working week (seven calendar days) before the original deadline for receipt of feedback.

QMU requires staff as a minimum to submit feedback and grading for each assessment component on an appropriate pro forma (except where appropriate alternatives are provided (e.g. audio feedback). This applies to coursework and examinations. Feedback on course work will normally be individual. A digital copy of this pro forma will act as the archive copy of the feedback and grade awarded for that assessment. Pro formae may be completed electronically or scanned instead if handwritten. Feedback for examinations may be generic, however all students also have the right to request individual feedback from the Module Coordinator.

- 4.18 A copy of student assessments and the related feedback pro formae will be kept during the time that a student is matriculated, or as specified by the University's Records Retention Schedule.

5.0 Fairness, reliability and validity of assessment

- 5.1 Assessment can take many different forms, as dictated by the variety of programmes and learning outcomes but, in all cases it should be:

- Fair, in that there should be equality of treatment across all programmes and that there should be a consistent approach to equality and diversity;
- Valid, that is the assessment can be shown to be relevant to the intended learning outcomes;
- Reliable, in that there should be consistency of processes and standards across the institution and that there should be comparability of both the volume and complexity of assessment in relation to credit and level;
- Useful, in that it contributes to the knowledge and competencies and employability of the learner;
- Transparent, in that the requirements of the assessment in terms of intended learning outcomes and assessment criteria are made clear to the student.

- 5.2 To maximise accuracy and fairness of assessment programme teams are expected to follow the procedures for marking, moderation and blind double marking set out below. The terms 'marking', 'moderation' and 'blind double marking' are defined as follows:

Marking

The process of assessing students' work, taking into account QMU guidelines for assessment feedback and the relevant criteria/mark schemes as devised by programme and/or module teams.

Moderation

The process of confirming the consistency of the mark and feedback provided by the original marker(s).

Blind double marking

Marking conducted without access to marks, annotations or comments from any other marker. Both markers must use the relevant criteria and provide feedback to students in the agreed format.

- 5.3 All assessed work should have associated marking criteria. These guides to marking should be developed simultaneously with assessment instruments and, where practicable, be approved by the External Examiner. Sharing of approved marking criteria with students is a required feature of good practice. All feedback given to students should relate to the agreed marking criteria.

5.4 Internal Moderation

All assessments contributing the equivalent of more than 25 per cent to the final award at SCQF levels 9, 10, 11 and 12 must be blind double-marked for the whole cohort. This includes Honours projects and postgraduate dissertations. All summative assessments for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that are not blind-double marked must be moderated on a sampling basis as a means of verifying the accuracy of marking. The size of the sample to be moderated must be at least the square root of the total number of students (rounded to the nearest whole number) taking the assessment plus all borderline fails (those that are within 2% below the pass mark). The sample should include a range of performance and the minimum size should be six pieces of assessed work.

5.5 External Moderation

A sample as outlined above will be reviewed by External Examiners for levels leading to a named award.

It is the responsibility of the Module Coordinator to select the sample to be reviewed by the External Examiner.

Further information on External Examiner arrangements for collaborative programmes can be found in the [Collaborations Manual](#).

- 5.6 Where there are differences between first and second markers, these should be resolved through a process of discussion and negotiation. On occasions where such differences cannot be resolved through this method, the case will be referred to a third marker.
- 5.7 In circumstances where an External Examiner has concerns about the submitted marks for a sample of assessments, the External Examiner may not modify one or more marks of the sample group of students but must moderate the marks of the whole cohort. External Examiners may make recommendations only on the adjustment of marks. It is the responsibility of the Programme Team to consider these recommendations and take a final decision on the student mark.
- 5.8 The University operates a standardised system for anonymous marking to ensure fairness in the assessment process. Matriculation numbers are shown on the front cover of coursework or examination booklets, to assist in tracking and monitoring of anonymised work.
- 5.9 Proposals for exemption for modules that cannot be anonymously marked will be considered through the University's validation and review process or committee structure as appropriate.
- 5.10 School Academic Boards will review the implementation of anonymous marking across programmes and report to the Student Experience Committee on its operation as necessary.
- 5.11 In all cases Module Co-ordinators have responsibility for the conduct and quality control of assessment in their own module(s). Programme Leaders are deemed responsible for the quality of assessment across programmes and are accountable to the Head of Division / Associate Dean through the Programme Committee. Deans of School have responsibility for assessment policy and

staff development (as it affects assessment) within the parameters set by the University and any relevant professional and statutory bodies. It is expected however that this responsibility will be delegated to Heads of Division.

- 5.12 School Offices are responsible for the maintenance and retention of records of all provisional marks. The Student Records Office and the School Office under the direction of the Assistant Secretary, Registry and Academic Administration, will maintain a central archive of approved final marks.

6.0 Forms of assessment

- 6.1 The form and balance of assessment for each module should be such as to provide the most accurate assessment of the student's achievement of the module's aims, objectives and learning outcomes. Assessment may be by end-of-module assessment; or by intermittent or periodic assessment undertaken during the course of the module.

- 6.2 The module descriptor and the Programme Specification shall specify the relative assessment pattern, including weightings across components. The assessment pattern must be based on the intended learning outcomes of that module.

- 6.3 Normally assessment will relate to some or all of the learning outcomes of a single module. Where an assessment covers learning outcomes from two or more modules, this must be clearly described in the Programme Specification and module descriptors and the method of attributing marks to each module should be clearly defined.

- 6.4 By the commencement of each module the Module Co-ordinator must advise the enrolled students of the form of the assessment and the timing of the components which make up the assessment. This will be consistent with the overall framework established for the programme's assessment, as specified in the module descriptors.

- 6.5 At the start of each programme, Programme Leaders will refer students to the assessment regulations for the programme governing progression and award, and of any changes thereto.

- 6.6 Attendance conditions can be imposed but must be made clear to students and a register of attendance taken. Implications of non-attendance in terms of eligibility to undertake assessments must also be made clear.

PART B AWARD REGULATIONS

7.0 Marks, grades and levels of performance

7.1 Assessment is primarily a matter of academic judgement, and the computational structure is designed to facilitate consistent judgements.

7.2 A student's overall performance on an **undergraduate** module will be given marks within one of seven grades as follows:

Grade	Mark	Corresponding level in an Honours degree classification
A*	80% and above	first class
A	70% and above	first class
B	60 – 69.9%	upper second
C	50 – 59.9%	lower second
D	40 – 49.9%	third class
E	30 – 39.9%	fail
F	20 – 29.9%	fail
G	19.9% or below	fail

7.3 A student's overall performance on a **postgraduate** module will be given marks within one of eight grades as follows:

Grade	Mark	Award classification
A*	80% and above	Distinction
A	70 – 79%	Distinction
B	60 – 69%	Merit
C	50 – 59%	Pass
D	40 – 49%	Fail
E	30 – 39%	Fail
F	20 – 29%	Fail
G	19% or below	Fail

7.4 These grades should be used in a consistent fashion at all levels of assessment

whether it is judging a student's overall performance; a cohort's performance, a module grade, or a piece of assessed coursework.

7.5 The criteria for each of the grades above are listed in the Appendices.

7.6 Normally subjects will be assessed using marks and grades. However, in exceptional circumstances subjects may be assessed using grades only. This will be recorded in programme regulations.

7.7 If an **undergraduate** subject is assessed using a grade only, then the following grade-to-mark conversion scheme shall be used for the purposes of computation:

Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Mark	85	77	65	55	45	35	25	10

7.8 If a **postgraduate** subject is assessed using a grade only, then the following grade-to-mark conversion scheme shall be used for the purpose of computation.

Grade	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Mark	85	75	65	55	45	35	25	10

In most cases, the mark is set at the midpoint of the band. However, the mark at Grade A* is limited to 85 to reflect the comparatively few marks likely to be awarded over 90%.

7.9 If appropriate, examiners may adjust the raw marks attained by students in individual subjects, but the basis of the scaling must be reported to the Board of Examiners who will be asked to endorse the scaling.

8.0 Award

8.1 To gain an undergraduate award, a student must normally be a registered student at the University for at least one academic year. Minimum registration periods for postgraduate awards are set out in the Taught Postgraduate Framework.

To qualify for the following awards the student must fulfil the subject specific

requirements for the name of the award and also:

Cert HE	120 credit points at SCQF level 7
Dip HE	240 credit points, at least 120 at SCQF level 8
Degree	360 credit points, at least 120 at SCQF level 9 and 120 at SCQF level 8
Honours Degree	480 credit points, at least 120 at SCQF level 10 and 120 at SCQF level 9
Graduate Diploma	120 credit points, at minimum of SCQF level 9
Postgraduate Certificate	60 credit points, at SCQF level 11
Postgraduate Diploma	120 credit points, at SCQF level 11
Masters Degree	180 credit points at SCQF level 11

10 SCQF Credits are equivalent to 5 European Credits (ECTS) therefore 120 SCQF credits equal 60 ECTS

- 8.2 The classification of the award of the Degree with Honours will be based on the marks obtained in level three (20%) and level four (80%). Weighted aggregate scores will be rounded to one decimal place. The classification will be based upon the average mark obtained by combining the weighted results of all modules studied in levels three and four.

70 and above	First Class
>=60% and <70%	Second Class: Upper division
>=50% and <60%	Second Class: Lower division
>=40% and <50%	Third Class

- 8.3 The award of an Ordinary Degree can include an award with distinction, in cases where the average mark for the twelve 10 credit modules (or equivalent) at level three is 65% or higher.

- 8.4 The award of taught Masters Degrees and Postgraduate Diplomas may include an award with distinction or merit. The award of Postgraduate Certificate is without distinction or merit.

A distinction is granted automatically if the weighted average mark (each module being weighted in relation to its size – the dissertation will be weighted x 4 - is 70% or over.

A merit is granted automatically if the weighted average mark (each module being weighted in relation to its size – the dissertation will be weighted x 4 - is 60% or over.

8.5 When granted an award a student will automatically be de-registered and must reapply if they wish to proceed to a higher or different award.

8.6 Where a student is admitted to the University at level four the classification will be based entirely on level four grades.

8.7 Where a student is admitted to a level and given additional credit at that level gained externally, the grades from that credit may contribute to the classification where the credit is at the appropriate level and where marks are available. Otherwise the classification will be based on grades gained entirely within the University.

9.0 Decision on award classifications and distinctions in borderline cases (undergraduate degrees)

9.1 All weighted average marks falling 0.5 per cent or less below the classification or distinction boundary are automatically reclassified at the higher level.

9.2 All weighted average marks falling between 0.6 per cent and two percent below the classification or distinction boundary are deemed borderline cases.

9.3 For honours degrees the final classification is determined by the marks across level four credits. Borderline cases where any 60 or more credits (core or elective modules) are achieved in the classification above the boundary will be awarded the higher classification of degree.

9.4 For ordinary degrees the final award is determined by the marks across level three credits. Borderline cases where any 60 or more credits (core or elective modules) are achieved in the distinction category (65% or above) will be awarded the degree with distinction.

9.5 Additional viva voce examinations involving the External Examiner should not be used in the consideration of borderline cases.

10.0 Decision on distinctions in borderline cases (postgraduate degrees)

10.1 All weighted average marks falling 0.5 per cent or less below the distinction/merit boundary are automatically reclassified at the higher level.

10.2 All weighted average marks falling between 0.6 per cent and two percent below the distinction/merit boundary are deemed borderline cases. In these cases the award of distinction/merit is determined by consideration of marks across all credits contributing to the Programme.

10.3 For standard 180 credit Masters Programmes, borderline cases where 90 credits or more (core or elective modules) are marked at 70% or above will be awarded the distinction.

For standard 180 credit Masters Programmes, borderline cases where 90 credits or more (core or elective modules) are marked at 60% or above will be awarded the merit.

10.4 For standard 120 credit Postgraduate Diploma Programmes, borderline cases where 60 credits or more (core or elective modules) are marked at 70% or above will be awarded the distinction.

For standard 120 credit Postgraduate Diploma Programmes, borderline cases where 60 credits or more (core or elective modules) are marked at 60% or above will be awarded the merit.

10.5 For non standard Postgraduate Diploma and Masters Programmes, i.e. Postgraduate Diploma Programmes rated at more than 120 credits, or Masters Programmes rated at more than 180 credits, borderline cases where 50% or more of the total credits are marked at 70% or above will be awarded the distinction. Exceptionally, programme specific regulations may be defined for such Programmes, to be agreed at the point of validation or review.

For non standard Postgraduate Diploma and Masters Programmes, i.e. Postgraduate Diploma Programmes rated at more than 120 credits, or Masters Programmes rated at more than 180 credits, borderline cases where 50% or more of the total credits are marked at 60% or above will be awarded the merit. Exceptionally, programme specific regulations may be defined for such

Programmes, to be agreed at the point of validation or review.

- 10.6 Additional viva voce examinations involving the External Examiner should not be used in the consideration of borderline cases.

11.0 Decision on an award in absence of complete assessment information

- 11.1 Boards of Examiners have discretion to make an award in the absence of complete assessment information where it is established to the satisfaction of the Board of Examiners that:

- such absence is due to a valid documented cause, which would include, but not be limited to, a student's illness;
- there is enough evidence of the student's achievement at the level at which they are being examined, which would normally equate to 2/3rds of the assessable work at that level, or evidence is subsequently obtained.

Where Boards of Examiners use their discretion to make an award in the absence of complete assessment information, the justification for this action should be included in the minutes of the meeting.

- 11.2 Awards may be recommended with or without Honours or distinction as appropriate. In order to reach such a decision the Board of Examiners may assess the candidate by any appropriate and reasonable means. Any such assessment will for the purpose of these regulations be deemed a first assessment.

- 11.3 The Board of Examiners has a duty to gain as much information about the candidate's ability and performance as possible before making decisions.

- 11.4 Decisions made in absence of complete information must aim to ensure consistency of standard and equality of opportunity for the student under consideration as compared with his/her peers. The student must not be put in a position of unfair advantage over other candidates for the award.

12.0 Withdrawing from a module

- 12.1 A student withdrawing from a module after 25% of the duration has elapsed

may provide the Module Co-ordinator with a written explanation of reasons for withdrawal. If the Module Co-ordinator accepts these as valid extenuating circumstances, the student will suffer no academic penalty, i.e. the withdrawal will not count as a fail. The student will receive a transcript showing them as withdrawn and will receive no credit.

12.2 A student withdrawing from a module after 25% of the duration without providing evidence of extenuating circumstances will be recorded as a fail.

13.0 Transcripts

13.1 The student's assessment record or academic transcript shall specify for each module taken:

- the title;
- the credit points and the level (if defined);
- the academic year in which most recently taken;
- the grade and mark most recently obtained;
- the name of the University together with, if appropriate, the name of any other institution sharing responsibility for the student's programme of study or research;
- the location of study;
- the language of instruction/assessment;
- decision on progress/award.

13.2 Academic transcripts are issued online following Boards of Examiners. They are issued on secure paper to exiting students.

13.3 The University's transcript meets the requirements of the European Diploma Supplement.

13.4 Guidance on European Credit Points is provided for all students receiving transcripts in the accompanying Guidance Notes.

PART C ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

14.0 Terminology

For the purposes of these regulations the following definitions shall apply:

14.1 Component

A component is defined as an individual piece of assessment, for example an examination or an essay. Some modules will have one assessment component only. Others may have multiple components.

14.2 Reassessment

Reassessment means the opportunity to re-sit an assessment component which has been failed once only. Normally reassessment happens within the same academic year or shortly thereafter. The timing of the reassessment is at the discretion of the Board of Examiners but must allow the student sufficient time to prepare.

14.3 Repeat

A student who has been reassessed and has failed an assessment for the second time may be offered the opportunity to repeat the module in its entirety with full reassessment facilities. This is at the discretion of the Board of Examiners. The timing of the repeat module and attendance requirements are at the discretion of the Board of Examiners and will be notified to students.

15.0 Programme regulations

15.1 Programme regulations for progression and award are written in the context of the University's general assessment regulations; they should be interpreted in that context and where they are silent the University's general assessment regulations are taken to apply. Programme specific regulations shall cover the following points:

- the requirements for passing a module;
- the requirements for progression;
- the conditions and limits to the provision for reassessment of modules;
- the conditions and limits to the provision for repeating a module or a level;
- the conditions under which a student shall be required to withdraw from the programme.

It is expected that Programme regulations will be consistent with the University's general assessment regulations. Any exceptions must be approved through the validation or committee approval process.

16.0 Assessment of a module

16.1 To pass an undergraduate module, a student must obtain at least 40% overall, and at least 30% in each component of assessment as specified in the module descriptor. To pass a postgraduate module, a student must obtain at least 50% overall, and at least 40% in each component of assessment as specified in the module descriptor. This regulation applies to the first attempt at the module only. Regulations for reassessment and repeat of modules are detailed below.

16.2 Where a student has achieved an overall mark of 40% or above (50% for postgraduate modules) but has fallen below the minimum permitted mark in an individual component, this will be shown as a qualifying fail on the academic transcript with a grade of Q.

16.3 Where a student is reassessed in an undergraduate module at a second attempt or repeats an undergraduate module in its entirety, the maximum mark that can be achieved for the module is 40%. Where a student is reassessed in a postgraduate module at a second attempt or repeats a postgraduate module in its entirety, the maximum mark that can be achieved for the module is 50%. The nature and extent of the failure will not affect the student's right to be reassessed.

16.4 Module specific regulations which deviate from 15.1 and 15.2 must be approved through the University's validation committee approval process and clearly recorded in the module descriptor.

16.5 Applications may be made to the Programme Leader, who will consult with the Module Co-ordinator, with appropriate supporting documentary evidence, for:

- extension to an assessment deadline;
- deferment of an examination;
- special arrangements for undertaking an examination.

17.0 Decisions on student progression

17.1 Student progression from one level of the programme to the next is at the discretion of the Board of Examiners taking into account students' performance in all modules and the amount of academic credit accrued during the year.

17.2 The main Board of Examiners is responsible for determining:

- whether the student remains in registration;
- the conditions governing the student's progression;
- the award for which the student is eligible.

17.3 Where there is a tiered system of Boards of Examiners, the Module Board will have the authority to moderate and confirm marks and grades for each of the modules for which it is responsible, and determine the form and timing of any reassessment offered. The decision of the Module Board of Examiners may be overturned by the Progression/Award Board of Examiners following consideration of the full student profile.

17.4 Decisions on a student's continued registration will be made at the end of each academic year, after reassessment results are known. The main Board of Examiners will take account of the following guidelines in making their decisions.

17.5 For undergraduate full-time students:

a) Pass modules rated to a total of 80 or more credits – continue in registration as a full-time student

Normally full-time students undertake 120 credits in an academic year. Exceptionally, full-time students can take a maximum of 160 credits in any academic year. This regulation is intended to support students carrying forward modules and not to facilitate completion of studies in a shorter time than the usual minimum period of registration or to allow students to undertake additional optional modules in an academic session.

b) Pass modules rated to a total of 60 or 70 credits – continue in registration as a part-time student but may not register for modules rated at more than 70 credits in the next year of study

c) Pass modules rated at 50 credits or less – required to discontinue registration

- 17.6 A part-time student allowed to continue in registration, wishing to transfer to full-time study will have her or his application considered by the programme's admission tutor. Transfer is not at the student's discretion.
- 17.7 The only decisions available to the Board of Examiners on progress and award shall be:
- a) Continue – passed all assessments
 - b) Required to be reassessed in the failed module(s) before continuing
 - c) Continue – but required to be reassessed in the failed/deferred module(s) in next academic year
 - d) Continue – but required to repeat the failed module(s) in next academic year
 - e) Offered opportunity to repeat the entire level in next academic year before continuing
 - f) Offered opportunity to repeat failed module(s) in next academic year as a part-time student before continuing
 - g) Continue in part time registration (applies to part-time students only)
 - h) No reassessment allowed – required to withdraw from course
 - i) Decision deferred – outstanding assessments as a first diet
 - j) Decision deferred – outstanding reassessments
 - k) Recommendation to Senate for specific awards
- 17.8 Undergraduate programmes of study are designed on four levels corresponding with Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework levels 7, 8, 9 and 10, with conceptual and material progression being designed into the structure from level to level. Thus, it is expected that students will progress from level to level, and the structure of the programme and the timetables are developed accordingly. Although the above regulations may allow a full-time student to stay in full-time registration albeit without a completed level of study, it may not be possible to construct a programme around the timetable available which is academically coherent and which makes best advantage of the student's time. In most cases students will be expected and advised but not required to complete a level of study before progressing to the next level.
- 17.9 Full-time students may not normally proceed to level four study unless they are eligible for the award of an Ordinary Degree or exceptionally fall short by only 20 credit points.

17.10 A student may cease to be registered for a postgraduate award if he or she:

- a) fails to register on any module in two successive semesters without prior approval (unless enrolled on a dissertation)
- b) is granted the award of PgCert, PgDip, MSc, MA, MBA, Executive Masters or MFA
- c) fails to have the dissertation proposal approved after two submissions
- d) accumulates fails as specified in regulations 17.11 and 17.12
- e) fails the dissertation on two attempts

17.11 A student will normally be required to withdraw from a postgraduate award if he or she accumulates four or more failures, whether or not these have been later redeemed through reassessment, on any standard taught modules (15 credits). A failure is defined as an unsuccessful attempt at the assessment for a module. For example, this could be failures in four separate modules at the first attempt, or failure at first and second attempt in one module and failures at first attempt in two other modules.

17.12 Individual postgraduate programmes with a non-standard structure may define programme specific regulations under which a student may be required to withdraw. These regulations should be broadly in line with the above principle. In other words, students will normally be allowed to accumulate at least three failures, but will not be allowed to fail 50% of the taught modules at the first attempt. Programme specific regulations defined to meet the requirements of professional bodies should be approved by the validation panel.

18.0 Reassessment of a module

18.1 Reassessment is permitted in order to allow a student to make good an initial failure. This affords the student an opportunity to demonstrate the standard required to pass modules, and ultimately to gain an award. A student who has passed a module at the first opportunity shall not be entitled to a further assessment in order to obtain a higher grade.

18.2 The Board of Examiners may at its discretion allow an undergraduate student to be re-assessed in up to eight taught modules (equivalent to 80 credits) in any one academic year. The Board of Examiners may at its discretion allow a postgraduate student to be re-assessed in up to four taught modules during the

course of their studies.

- 18.3 The Board of Examiners shall decide on the form of the reassessment (e.g. written examination, viva voce, or an additional assignment), taking into account the nature of the failed module and the nature of the failure. This may differ from the format of the first assessment and need not be the same for all students provided equity of experience is maintained. The Board of Examiners can allow for full or partial reassessment of the components as appropriate.
- 18.4 Normally, a student may not be reassessed in a module more than once, other than when the module is repeated.
- 18.5 A candidate for reassessment is not entitled to be reassessed in components that are no longer part of the programme. A Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, make such special arrangements as it deems suitable in cases where it is inappropriate for students to be reassessed in the same elements, or by the same methods as at the first attempt.
- 18.6 All reassessments shall take place before the commencement of the next session of the programme. They should be late enough to allow the students time to prepare themselves, and to avoid overload of assessment shall normally take place in the autumn diets. Students cannot request an extraordinary exam sitting.
- 18.7 A student who is reassessed for a module failure in an undergraduate module, where there are no clear extenuating circumstances, shall be awarded no more than 40% on passing the reassessment. A student who is reassessed for a module failure in a postgraduate module, where there are no clear extenuating circumstances, shall be awarded no more than 50% on passing the reassessment.
- 18.8 All reassessment results shall be based only upon performance in reassessments; no marks may be carried forward from a student's first attempt at the assessments. To pass an undergraduate module at reassessment, students must achieve at least 30% in each reassessed component and a weighted average of at least 40%. To pass a postgraduate module at reassessment, students must achieve at least 40% in each reassessed component and a weighted average of at least 50%.

18.9 A student who has been absent from an assessment or who has performed badly due to illness or other good cause acceptable to the Board of Examiners or the Extenuating Circumstances Panel shall be allowed to take the assessment and it shall be treated as a first assessment.

19.0 Repeating a module

19.1 Boards of Examiners will take into account a student's overall academic progress in deciding whether or not to permit repetition of a module.

19.2 In the event of a failure after reassessment in a module, the Board of Examiners may permit a student to repeat the module, with full reassessment facilities. No parts of the previous assessment may be carried forward. The regulations for attendance shall apply to the repeated module unless otherwise specified by the Board of Examiners. A student may repeat a failed module only once.

19.3 A candidate for repeating is not entitled to repeat components that are no longer part of the programme. A Board of Examiners may, at its discretion, make such special arrangements as it deems suitable in cases where it is inappropriate for students to repeat the same elements, or by the same methods as at the first attempt.

19.4 Where a module is repeated the mark and grade obtained will replace the mark and grade achieved at earlier attempts. When repeating a module regulation 15.1 will apply to assessment of individual components. However, the maximum overall mark that can be achieved when repeating an undergraduate module is 40%. The maximum overall mark that can be achieved when repeating a postgraduate module is 50%

20.0 Assessment of disabled students and of students whose first language is not English

20.1 Disabled students

20.1.1 If, through disability, a student is unable to be assessed by the prescribed method for the module, reasonable adjustments (as agreed by the Academic Disabled Student Coordinator) will be detailed within an Individual Learning

Plan.

20.1.2 Arrangements for the assessment of disabled students will be made prior to, or at the point of assessment. Further allowance or compensation for disability will not be made in the marking of assessed work.

20.1.3 Further information can be found in the Disability Policy.

20.2 Students whose first language is not English

All students whose first language is not English will normally be permitted to use language-only dictionaries in examinations. Electronic dictionaries are not permitted (please refer to Exam Regulations section). No extra time will be allocated for students whose first language is not English.

21.0 Penalties for word limits and late submission of assessment

21.1 A piece of written work which exceeds the specified word limit by 10% or more will receive a maximum mark of 40% for undergraduate or 50% for postgraduate programmes.

21.2 In each piece of written work where a word limit is identified, students are required to include and clearly state the total number of words used. The number of words counted should include all the text, references and quotations used in the text, but should exclude abstracts, supplements to the text, diagrams, appendices, reference lists and bibliographies.

21.3 Any student who submits work to be assessed after the assessment submission date and time, without the prior agreement of the Programme Leader, or without good or agreed cause, will have marks deducted according to the following criteria:

- if submitted, in a first diet, after the deadline but up to and including 6 days after the deadline) a maximum mark of 40% can be achieved for undergraduate programmes and a maximum mark of 50% for postgraduate programmes
- if submitted, in a first diet, 7 days or more (including on the 7th day after the submission deadline) a mark of 0% will be awarded
- if coursework is submitted after the deadline for a reassessment a mark of

0% will be awarded.

Example (first diet)

Friday 4pm submission		
Day 1	Saturday 4pm	A maximum mark of 40% can be achieved for undergraduate programmes and a maximum mark of 50% for postgraduate programmes
Day 2	Sunday 4pm	
Day 3	Monday 4pm	
Day 4	Tuesday 4pm	
Day 5	Wednesday 4pm	
Day 6	Thursday 4pm	
Any later than this		A mark of 0% will be awarded

PART D RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

22.0 Student responsibility in assessment

22.1 It is the responsibility of students to:

- familiarise themselves with the regulations for their course. Students should consult their Programme/Scheme Handbook and/or their Academic Tutor;
- recognise the role of assessment in the achievement and recognition of their learning;
- familiarise themselves with the examination periods (both first attempt and reassessment and make themselves available for the examination period);
- attend written examinations and observe the University's Instruction to Candidates in Examinations (to be read out to students prior to the start of examinations). In brief, these require candidates to attend in good time, to bring their matriculation card, not to communicate with other candidates, not to cheat, not to disrupt the event, to complete the answer paper as instructed, not to bring into the hall any unauthorised material and not to remove any part of an answer paper from the hall;
- attend all other types of assessment, for example, practical examinations, class tests and presentations;
- submit all work for assessment in accordance with the requirements for their course;
- provide evidence, in advance of the Board of Examiners, of any extenuating circumstances. This evidence is normally written by an independent source such as a medical practitioner and should be forwarded to the Programme Leader. Students should be aware that Boards of Examiners will take account of all certificated or verified evidence submitted on behalf of students in their deliberations on individual performance.

22.2 If a student fails to attend examinations or submit work for assessment without good cause, the Board of Examiners has the authority to deem the student to have failed the assessments concerned.

22.3 Fraudulent practices such as copying, cheating, collusion, plagiarism (i.e. the

presentation by an individual of another person's ideas or work (in any medium, published or unpublished) as though they were his or her own) are serious academic offences and will incur appropriate penalties. Students must not submit work obtained from an essay bank or website essay writing service. Students are urged to seek advice from academic staff or the Effective Learning Service if in any doubt about the foregoing practices. All students are expected to seek clear guidance on the form and manner in which assessments are to be completed.

22.3 Students are not permitted to substantially reproduce the same piece of course work for more than one assignment except where they are explicitly required to do so by the assignment specification.

22.4 If a student is found to have cheated or attempted to gain an unfair advantage, the Board of Examiners, following a recommendation from the Dean or Disciplinary Panel, has authority to deem the student to have failed part or all of the assessment and to determine whether or not the student shall be permitted to be re-assessed.

22.5 Students must ensure the proper acknowledgement of the borrowings from other sources, whether published or unpublished. Divisions should provide guidance on how such borrowings should be acknowledged in a manner appropriate to that discipline.

22.6 Serious cases of cheating and plagiarism will be referred for consideration through the University's disciplinary procedure. Undertaking fraudulent practices can result in a student being required to leave the University.

22.7 QMU has a policy to use the TurnItIn UK plagiarism detection system, or other equivalent systems, to help students avoid plagiarism and improve their scholarship skills. This service is available to all matriculated students at QMU. Academic staff may submit student work to TurnItIn UK or another equivalent system.

23.0 Responsibility of other individuals and bodies in assessment

23.1 **Senate**, through its Student Experience Committee, has the responsibility for:

- the development of assessment policy;
- monitoring the use of this policy by the Schools;
- periodically reviewing and revising this policy.

23.2 The **Deans of School** have the responsibility for ensuring that:

- programmes within that School conform to this Policy;
- assessment processes are approved and reviewed;
- assessment processes are secure;
- through the annual monitoring process, there is reflection on student performance in assessment and in relation to programme learning outcomes;
- periodic review of assessment strategies are conducted;
- staff are supported in the development of assessment strategies and practices;
- students are involved in the evaluation of assessment strategies;
- External Examiners are briefed on this Policy;
- issues arising through the implementation of this Policy are conveyed to the Student Experience Committee.

23.3 **Programme Leaders** have the responsibility for:

- assuring that academic standards are maintained through the effective use of this policy and its local implementation via the programme definitive document;
- monitoring the outcomes of assessment and reporting these outcomes to the School.

23.4 **Module Coordinators (with appropriate academic staff)** have the responsibility for:

- designing assessments that both conform to this policy and which assess the specified learning outcomes and which make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of all learners;
- ensuring that feedback is provided on student performance in relation to assessment outcomes;
- clearly specifying the date by which a student can expect to receive feedback on each summative assignment. This date must be communicated

to the student at the same time as the assessment deadline. The date should normally be no later than 15 working days after submission for level three and four undergraduate assessment (with the exception of Honours projects and dissertations), and no later than 20 working days after submission for level one and two undergraduate assessment, for Honours projects and dissertations, and for postgraduate assessment. Staff should note that 'working days' equates to Monday to Friday, excluding University closure dates, i.e. part-time working or periods of annual leave should not result in an extension to the 15/20 working day maximum. The maximum of 15/20 working days includes all stages within the marking process (i.e. marking, cross-marking, collation of marks and feedback, sending marks and feedback to the School Office, dissemination of marks and feedback to students by the School Office) and applies to all staff, including Visiting Lecturers. In exceptional circumstances, the original date communicated to students for receipt of feedback may be extended. Any such extension must be communicated to students at least one working week (seven calendar days) before the original deadline for receipt of feedback. Where a student has been granted an extension, the timescale for receiving feedback will be adjusted accordingly.

Different arrangements may apply for formative assessment, depending on the activity and discipline. These should be communicated to the student at the same time as the formative assessment is set.

24.0 Project supervision

24.1 General

All project supervision meetings with undergraduate, postgraduate and research students must be documented, signed by both student and supervisor, and filed as a record of the supervisory process. Documentation should include the date and duration of the meeting and a summary of the discussion.

24.2 Honours Project Supervision

24.2.1 The time allocated to supervision of Honours level projects and dissertations should normally be no less than three hours and not more than five hours per

student. These minimum and maximum time allocations apply only to supervisory meetings with students and do not include time taken to read draft work.

24.2.2 Early in the academic year all supervisors should hold an initial meeting with their supervisees to discuss key elements of the process, including expectations, regulations, terms of reference and operational procedures. This meeting could be held as a joint meeting between a supervisor and all of his/her supervisees. A record of all meetings between a student and their supervisor should be lodged in the student file at the time of submission of the project or dissertation.

24.2.3 Staff members should normally read and give feedback on one draft only and should not mark or re-write this work.

24.3 Postgraduate project and research supervision

Further information is available in the Taught Postgraduate Framework and Research Degrees Regulations.

25.0 Academic dishonesty and plagiarism

25.1 Introduction

25.1.1 This institution's degrees and other academic awards are given in recognition of the candidate's achievement. Plagiarism is therefore, together with other forms of academic dishonesty such as personation, falsification of data, computer and calculation fraud, examination room cheating and bribery, considered an act of academic fraud and is an offence against University discipline.

25.1.2 Plagiarism is defined as follows:

The presentation by an individual of another person's ideas or work (in any medium, published or unpublished) as though they were his or her own.

25.1.3 In the following circumstances academic collusion represents a form of plagiarism:

Academic collusion is deemed to be unacceptable where it involves the unauthorised and unattributed collaboration of students or others work resulting in plagiarism, which is against University discipline.

25.1.4 QMU has a policy to use the TurnItIn UK plagiarism detection system, or other equivalent systems, to help students avoid plagiarism and improve their scholarship skills. This service is available to all matriculated students at QMU. QMU tutors may submit student work to TurnItIn UK, or another equivalent system.

25.2 Referencing

Students' attention is drawn to the guide to referencing available in the library.

25.3 Prevention

25.3.1 All members of staff should explain to their students at the start of each session that plagiarism and academic fraud are unacceptable forms of cheating, which will be penalised severely. Such warnings should be repeated during the session and are especially necessary where dissertations, projects or coursework are substantial elements of the curriculum. Every opportunity should be taken to reinforce this message by incorporating it in published material such as Programme or scheme guides and, in the case of postgraduate research students, by its inclusion in the Research Degrees Code of Practice.

25.3.2 These warnings should be accompanied by specific advice from Divisions about what constitutes plagiarism and academic fraud. For example, such advice should indicate where a particular discipline makes the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate use of acknowledged or unacknowledged sources; what is regarded as acceptable collaboration between students undertaking joint project work; and what is expected of a dissertation or thesis. Dissertations should clearly indicate whether it is an original contribution to knowledge or a critical survey of published material. Training students to make such distinctions is part of the academic process and should be formally and publicly acknowledged as such. This is particularly significant since some of the cases arising stem from genuine ignorance on the part of the students who have never received guidance on how to acknowledge sources properly.

25.3.3 Scrutiny of academic work should be sufficient to ensure that signs of plagiarism or unacceptable levels of co-operation, whether intentional or not, are detected at an early stage and brought to students' attention through tutorial guidance and in some cases perhaps by written warning.

25.3.4 Dissertation supervisors and other academic staff responsible for assessment and guidance should be aware of cultural relativities that may affect some students' approach to referencing. In providing guidance, staff will be expected to acknowledge cultural differences and to exercise appropriate sensitivity.

25.4 Identifying and reporting

25.4.1 All concerns by tutors related to plagiarism must initially be discussed with the Programme Leader or other designated person who is responsible for making the decision to progress the case further under the University's guidelines.

25.4.2 If it is judged that the case falls into the category of poor academic practice that requires only remedial action, then the Programme Leader shall inform the student and either carry out the actions required or ensure that they are carried out via the referring tutor such as referring a student to the Effective Learning Service.

25.4.3 If it is judged that there is academic misbehaviour or academic misconduct, then the case will be referred to the Dean of School under the QMU Code of Discipline. The Programme Leader will be responsible for the submission of evidential material to the Dean of School and for informing the student or students involved and any referring staff member of the decision to move to the Disciplinary process.

25.5 Investigation

25.5.1 The Dean of School or other person designated by the Dean shall investigate all referred cases. In consultation with the University Secretary, the Dean will determine if the case may be dealt with summarily under Section 5 of the QMU Code of Discipline.

25.5.2 For all referred cases, the Dean will interview the student before any other

steps are taken under the Code of Discipline. The Dean will advise the student in writing of the referral, invite the student to make representations and advise the student of the support mechanisms available.

25.5.3 At the interview, a friend or representative may accompany the student. If the Dean considers it appropriate to do so, and if the student agrees, the matter may be dealt with summarily, without recourse to a disciplinary committee.

25.5.4 A designated member of the School Office will attend the student interview.

25.5.5 The School Office will maintain records of all cases referred to the Dean or to a Disciplinary Committee. The member of the School Office acting as the Secretary to the Examination Board will report the outcome of the case to the Board. This will be appropriate only in those cases where the allegation has been upheld, and the penalty applied by the Dean of School or the Disciplinary Committee.

25.5.6 The designated member of the School Office will also, when appropriate:

- migrate case records to a new field in ISIS;
- delete migrated records from ISIS after the expiry date defined by QMU regulations;
- remove case records when a student leaves QMU.

25.5.7 The student will be responsible for:

- providing evidence on request;
- attending an investigatory meeting;
- either accepting a disciplinary recommendation or proceeding to an appeal under the provisions of the Code of Discipline.

25.5.8 In the case of a distance learning student an investigatory meeting can be conducted by any appropriate means.

25.5.9 At all times, students will be able to call upon the support and guidance of the Students' Union. It is expected that the Students' Union will have trained staff to support students and to attend interviews/meetings with the Dean and/or the Disciplinary Committee.

- 25.5.10 If the matter is dealt with summarily, the Dean will consider written or oral evidence as he or she thinks fit. That may include any plagiarism detection software or other dishonesty detection mechanisms made available by QMU. It will also include any evidence or representations from the student or students involved as well as from the Programme Leader or from any other member of staff deemed necessary to make a determination. This can include 'expert witnesses'. The QMU student record system may also be checked for previous recorded instances of proven plagiarism.
- 25.5.11 If there is a possibility that the allegation, if proved, may lead to the suspension or exclusion of the student, then the case must be referred to a Disciplinary Committee.
- 25.5.12 In the case of a distance learning student, a telephone or video conference interview will be organised and the student fully briefed about the timing and structure of the interview;
- 25.5.13 If a finding of guilt is made, the Dean may impose any of the penalties set out in the Code of Discipline, other than expulsion from the University.

At the termination of the proceedings, the Dean will write a short report. In the event of a finding of guilt, the report will set out the misconduct alleged, a brief summary of evidence received, the grounds for the finding of guilt, the penalty imposed, and the factors taken into account in deciding the penalty. A copy of the report will be sent to the student, to the Programme Leader and to the referring Tutor. If the report contains recommendations concerning examination marks, a copy of the report will also be sent to the appropriate Board of Examiners.

- 25.5.14 There is a right of appeal against a finding of guilt.

PART E APPENDICES

UNDERGRADUATE DESCRIPTORS with effect from academic year 2015-16; approved by Senate May 2015

Grade A* 80% and above

Outstanding performance, exceptionally able – pass

- Articulates an outstanding and comprehensive understanding of the question or problem
- Includes all of the most relevant information and issues raised by the question
- Demonstrates outstanding in-depth knowledge of appropriate reading through extensive references to texts, including journal articles
- Shows outstanding originality in problem solving, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation
- Presents outstanding arguments in a fluent and convincing manner.
- Displays an outstanding ability to synthesise concepts, knowledge and theory
- Shows in-depth awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the question

Grade A 70-79.9%

Excellent performance – pass

- Articulates an excellent understanding and interpretation of the question or problem
- Includes most of the relevant information and issues raised by the question
- Demonstrates an excellent in-depth knowledge of appropriate reading through references to texts, including journal articles
- Shows originality in problem solving, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation
- Shows an excellent understanding of theoretical/conceptual issues
- Presents excellent arguments in a balanced and coherent way
- Demonstrates excellent ability to analyse issues raised, synthesise materials and evaluate evidence presented
- Shows awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the question

Grade B 60-69.9%

Very good performance – pass

- Articulates a very good understanding and interpretation of the question or problem
- Includes many of the most relevant information and issues raised by the question
- Demonstrates a very good knowledge of appropriate reading through references to texts, including journal articles
- Shows some elements of problem solving, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation
- Shows consistent understanding of theoretical/conceptual issues
- Present arguments in a balanced and coherent way
- Demonstrates a very good ability to analyse issues raised and evaluate evidence presented
- Shows some awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the question

Grade C 50-59.9%

Good performance – pass

- Articulates a good understanding and interpretation of the question or problem
- Brings in several of the main points and issues raised by the question
- Demonstrates a good knowledge of appropriate reading through references to texts, including journal articles
- Shows some elements of problem solving, critical thinking, analysis and evaluation, but not consistently applied
- Shows good understanding of some theoretical/conceptual issues
- Presents most arguments reasonably clearly
- Demonstrates a good ability to analyse issues raised and evaluate evidence presented
- Shows good awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the question

Grade D 40-49.9%

Satisfactory Performance – pass

- Articulates satisfactory but limited understanding and interpretation of the question or problem
- Discusses some of the main points/issues raised by the question
- Demonstrates satisfactory knowledge of appropriate reading through references to texts, including journal articles
- Shows some satisfactory but inconsistent attempts to problem solve, analyse and evaluate
- Shows partial understanding of theoretical/conceptual issues
- Presents some arguments with some clarity
- Demonstrates a satisfactory ability to analyse issues raised or evaluate evidence presented.
- Shows satisfactory but limited awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the question
- Indicates that additional engagement may be required to sustain and enhance performance in subsequent modules and levels

Grade E 30-39.9%

Unsatisfactory performance - fail

- Articulates very limited understanding of the question or problem set
- Discusses few or none of the main points/issues raised by the question
- Demonstrates insufficient knowledge of appropriate reading through references to academic texts, including journal articles
- Shows narrow understanding of theoretical/conceptual issues
- Includes arbitrary or inaccurate factual information
- Presents arguments with little clarity
- Demonstrates very limited ability to analyse issues raised or evaluate evidence presented
- Shows limited awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the question

Grade F 20-29.9%**Unsatisfactory performance- fail**

- Articulates extremely limited or no understanding of the question or problem set
- Discusses mostly marginal or irrelevant points
- Demonstrates very limited or no knowledge of appropriate reading through references to academic texts, including journal articles
- Shows very narrow understanding of theoretical/conceptual issues
- Includes arbitrary or inaccurate factual information
- Presents arguments with very little clarity, or presents no argument at all
- Demonstrates little or no ability to analyse issues raised or evaluate evidence presented
- Shows very limited or no awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the question.

Grade G < 20%**Unsatisfactory performance or non-submission- Fail**

- Articulates little or no understanding of the question or problem set
- Discusses only marginal or irrelevant points
- Demonstrates virtually no knowledge of appropriate reading through references to academic texts, including journal articles
- Shows very narrow or no understanding of theoretical/conceptual issues
- Includes arbitrary or inaccurate factual information
- Presents arguments with very little clarity, or presents no argument at all
- Demonstrates virtually no ability to analyse issues raised or evaluate evidence presented
- Shows very limited or no awareness of value judgements and assumptions embodied in the question

**POSTGRADUATE DESCRIPTORS with effect from academic year 2015-16;
approved by Senate May 2015**

Grade A* 80%+

Outstanding performance, exceptionally able – pass

- Mastery of the specialist area that demonstrates exceptional insight and breadth of knowledge.
- Exceptional comprehension of scholarly techniques and / or the research-base.
- Presents extensive evidence of outstanding scholarship with exceptional critical analysis and consistent deep knowledge of the specialist and related areas.
- Demonstrates outstanding awareness of and sensitivity to the limitations of evidence
- Outstanding ability to challenge and develop existing theory and/or professional practice within the specialist area.
- Demonstrates outstanding originality, creativity or innovation in the application of knowledge and / or practice
- Demonstrates exceptional synthesis in development and inter-relationship between concepts, theories, policies and practice.
- Displays outstanding potential to undertake research or be a leading practitioner within a specialist area.
- Demonstrates exceptional ability in synthesising knowledge from different disciplines.
- Outstanding ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical, visual)
- Meets the learning outcomes of the module or assessment.

Grade A 70- 79.9%

Excellent performance [distinction mark is 70%] – pass

- Mastery of the specialist area that demonstrates excellent insight and breadth of knowledge.
- Excellent comprehension of scholarly techniques and / or the research-base.
- Presents extensive evidence of excellent scholarship including critical analysis and deep knowledge of the specialist and related areas.
- Demonstrates excellent awareness of and sensitivity to the limitations of evidence
- Excellent ability to challenge existing theory and/or professional practice within the specialist area with some insight into potential developments.
- Demonstrates excellent creativity or innovation in the application of knowledge and / or practice with potential originality
- Demonstrates excellent synthesis in development and inter-relationship between concepts, theories, policies and practice.
- Displays excellent potential to undertake research or be a leading practitioner within a specialist area.
- Demonstrates excellent ability in synthesising knowledge from different disciplines.
- Excellent ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical, visual)
- Meets the learning outcomes of the module or assessment.

Grade B 60- 69.9%**Very good performance [merit mark is 60-69.9%] – pass**

- Very good insight and breadth of knowledge in specialist area.
- Very good comprehension of scholarly techniques and / or the research-base.
- Presents evidence of very good scholarship including critical analysis and some depth of knowledge of the specialist and related areas.
- Demonstrates very good awareness of and some sensitivity to the limitations of evidence
- Very good ability to challenge existing theory and/or professional practice within the specialist area with some insight into potential developments.
- Demonstrates some creativity or innovation in the application of knowledge and / or practice.
- Demonstrates very good synthesis in development and inter-relationship between concepts, theories, policies and practice.
- Displays some potential to undertake research or lead practice within a specialist area.
- Demonstrates very good ability in synthesising knowledge from different disciplines.
- Very good ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical)
- Meets the learning outcomes of the module or assessment.

Grade C 50- 59.9%**Satisfactory performance – pass**

- Satisfactory insight and knowledge in specialist area.
- Some comprehension of scholarly techniques and / or the research-base.
- Presents some evidence of scholarship including critical analysis but lacking depth or critique in some areas.
- Demonstrates some awareness of and some sensitivity to the limitations of evidence but these may not always be clearly articulated or understood
- Presents existing theory or comments on practice within the specialist area but with unsubstantiated claims or limited insight into alternative perspectives.
- Superficial understanding in the application of knowledge.
- Limited synthesis in development and inter-relationship between concepts, theories, policies and practice.
- Some ability to synthesise knowledge from different disciplines.
- Satisfactory ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical)
- Meets the learning outcomes of the module or assessment.

Grade D 40-49.9%**Unsatisfactory performance – fail**

- Unsatisfactory insight and knowledge in specialist area.
- Insufficient evidence of scholarly techniques and / or knowledge of the research-base.
- Lacks critical analysis or depth of argument in some areas.
- Limited awareness of the evidence with muddled understanding
- Presents some theory or comments on practice but highly descriptive and uncritical with unsubstantiated claims.

- Limited ability to apply knowledge.
- Limited synthesis of concepts, theories, policies and practice.
- Limited ability to synthesise knowledge from different disciplines.
- Limited ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical)
- Does not meet all the learning outcomes of the module or assessment.

Grade E 30-39.9%

Unsatisfactory performance - fail

- Unsatisfactory insight and knowledge in specialist area.
- Lack of evidence of scholarly techniques and / or knowledge of the research-base.
- Lack of critical analysis or depth of argument.
- Lack of awareness of the evidence and muddled understanding
- Presents little theory or limited comments on practice with highly descriptive and unsubstantiated claims.
- Lack of ability to apply knowledge.
- Lack of synthesis of concepts, theories, policies and practice.
- Lack of ability to synthesise knowledge from different disciplines.
- Lack of ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical)
- Does not meet all the learning outcomes of the module or assessment.

Grade F 20-29.9%

Unsatisfactory performance - fail

- Unsatisfactory insight or knowledge in specialist area.
- No evidence of scholarly techniques with minimal knowledge of the evidence or the research-base.
- Lack of analysis, depth of argument or attempts to apply knowledge.
- Presents minimal relevant theory or relevant comments on practice.
- Lack of attempt to synthesis concepts, theories, policies and practice.
- Very poor ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical)
- Does not meet the learning outcomes of the module or assessment.

Grade G <20%

Unsatisfactory performance and non-submission – fail

- No insight or knowledge in specialist area.
- No evidence of scholarly techniques or knowledge of the research-base.
- No analysis or depth of argument.
- No awareness or understanding of the evidence.
- Presents no relevant theory or relevant comments on practice.
- No attempt to apply knowledge.
- No attempt to synthesis concepts, theories, policies and practice.
- No evidence of ability to synthesise knowledge from different disciplines.
- Extremely poor ability to communicate knowledge (written, verbal, practical)
- Does not meet the learning outcomes of the module or assessment.

