

Ordinances and Regulations: Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate

**For students registered between September 2009 and August
2010**

Teaching and Learning Support Office

CONTENTS:

A. Ordinances

B. Regulations

1. Admission to the Programme
2. Duration of the Programme
3. Credits
4. Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L)
5. Progression and Assessment
6. Dissertation
7. Recommendation for Award

A. ORDINANCES

1. The University may award the taught degrees of Master, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates in accordance with the General Regulation XI.
2. Regulations for the degrees of Master of Enterprise (MEnt), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Master of Research (MRes), Master of Science (MSc) by Research and Master of Surgery (ChM) are published separately.
3. Regulations for integrated Degree of Master are published with the Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes.
4. Students for the above degrees, postgraduate diplomas and postgraduate certificates will pursue satisfactorily an approved programme of advanced study, as either a full or part-time student.
5. These ordinances and regulations provide a general framework for all taught postgraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates, and should be read in conjunction with detailed notes for guidance and programme specific regulations.
6. Regulations for Conduct and Discipline of Students, Student Complaints Procedures, Academic Appeals, and Work and Attendance of Students are provided in the University's General Regulations, XVII, XVIII, XIX and XX respectively.

B. REGULATIONS

1. Admission to the Programme

a. Applicants for admission to the Degree of Master and Postgraduate Diploma will normally have:

- a first degree (equivalent to a UK Honours Bachelors degree) or equivalent qualification from a recognised institution;

or

- evidence of previous advanced study, research or professional experience, which the University accepts as qualifying the applicant for entry.

b. Applicants for admission to the Postgraduate Certificate will normally have:

- evidence of academic qualifications or work experience which meets the approval of the University and allows them to be registered onto a Certificate programme or individual postgraduate course units.

c. All applicants must meet the minimum English language requirements of their chosen programme, as described by the University's Postgraduate Admissions Policy.

d. Students may be registered initially for the Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate. After successfully completing the required assessment, they may be permitted to progress to the Degree of Master or Postgraduate Diploma respectively.

e. A student awarded the Postgraduate Certificate may subsequently be permitted to use the credits awarded to count towards an appropriate Postgraduate Diploma or a Degree of Master, but only on condition that:

- the student achieved a pass mark of 40% or more to proceed with the Postgraduate Diploma, or 50% or more to proceed with the Degree of Master;
- all other requirements for progression as stated in section 5 have been met;
- the student has not previously been examined for the dissertation (or equivalent) element of the programme;
- the award of the Postgraduate Certificate is rescinded.

In these circumstances, for a Postgraduate Diploma, students will normally be required to complete the programme no more than four academic years after initial registration, or for a Degree of Master, no more than five academic years after initial registration.

**Ordinances and Regulations:
Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
March 2010**

- f. A student awarded the Postgraduate Diploma may subsequently be permitted to use the credits awarded to count towards an appropriate Degree of Master, but only on condition that:
- the student achieved a pass mark of 50% or;
 - all other requirements for progression as stated in section 5 have been met;
 - the student has not previously been examined for the dissertation (or equivalent) element of the programme;
 - the award of the Postgraduate Diploma is rescinded.

In these circumstances students will normally be required to complete the programme no more than five academic years after initial registration

2. Duration of Programme

- a. A Degree of Master will normally be a one-year programme equating to 45 teaching weeks within a 51 week period and the date for the end of the programme and submission of the dissertation (or equivalent) will be published in the programme handbook.
- b. A part-time Degree of Master student will complete the programme over a more extended period of time which will be published in the programme handbook, but will not exceed five academic years.
- c. A Postgraduate Diploma will be a full-time or part-time programme that will normally extend over not less than two academic semesters and will not exceed four academic years.
- d. A Postgraduate Certificate will be a full-time or part-time programme that will normally extend over not less than one academic semester and will not exceed two academic years.
- e. Programmes may be of longer full-time duration where there is an increase in the credit requirements (see 3d).

3. Credits

- a. A Degree of Master of one year full-time (or equivalent part time) duration will consist of a minimum of 180 credits, of which at least 150 will be at level 4 (level 7 in the FHEQ) with the remainder at level 3 (level 6 in the FHEQ)*.
- b. A Postgraduate Diploma will consist of a minimum of 120 credits, of which at least 90 will be at level 4 (level 7 in the FHEQ) with the remainder at level 3 (level 6 in the FHEQ).
- c. A Postgraduate Certificate will consist of a minimum of 60 credits at level 4 (level 7 in the FHEQ).
- d. For longer programmes, the total credit requirements for each award are increased *pro rata* to the length of the programme.

**Ordinances and Regulations:
Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
March 2010**

- e. All course units will normally be of 15 credits, or multiples thereof. A Degree of Master will normally include a dissertation or equivalent of at least 60 credits and a Postgraduate Diploma may include a project or extended essay of no more than 30 credits. The Postgraduate Certificate will not normally include a dissertation or project element.

* The FHEQ levels referred to are taken from the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications:

(<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI08/default.asp>)

4. Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

- a. A student may be permitted to receive an award of credits on the basis of demonstrated learning that has occurred at some point in the past and is appropriate to the programme both in content and currency. The award of credits can be based upon learning for which certification has been awarded by an educational institution or another education/training provider or uncertificated learning gained from experience.
- b. All APL applications will be approved in line with the University's overall policy on the award of APL, as follows:
- A Degree of Master will normally allow a maximum of 60 APL credits. APL credits will not count towards the dissertation (or equivalent) or project components.
 - A Postgraduate Diploma will normally allow a maximum of 30 APL credits. APL credits will not count towards the dissertation (or equivalent) or project components.
 - A Postgraduate Certificate will normally not allow any APL credit.
- c. Any unit thus exempted will not be awarded a mark but will be graded pass and hence excluded from the calculation of the overall mark.

5. Progression and Assessment

- a. Regulations for work and attendance are outlined in the University's General Regulations, XX.
- b. Students for the Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate will present themselves for assessment of their progress as required in the programme handbook.
- c. Students will normally successfully complete the taught component of the Degree of Master before they can progress to the dissertation (or equivalent), and must successfully complete the taught component before submission of the dissertation (or equivalent).
- d. The pass mark for a Degree of Master will be 50%.

Ordinances and Regulations:
Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
March 2010

- e. The pass mark for a Postgraduate Certificate and a Postgraduate Diploma will be 40%. A pass mark of 50% may be approved by the Faculty where required on discipline-specific grounds or for some professionally accredited programmes.
- f. A student registered on a Postgraduate Diploma or Masters programme who fails to satisfy the Examiners in any assessment of taught units may be permitted to resubmit the assessment or retake the examination on one further occasion, up to a maximum of 45 credits. The student will take this opportunity during the next available University examination period or within a period as published in the programme handbook.

A student registered on a Postgraduate Certificate programme who fails to satisfy the Examiners in any assessment of taught units may be permitted to resubmit the assessment or retake the examination on one further occasion, up to a maximum of 30 credits. The student will take this opportunity during the next available University examination period or within a period as published in the programme handbook.

- g. The maximum mark to be awarded for resubmitted coursework or retaken examination will normally be 50% for the Degree of Master and 40% for the Postgraduate Diploma (or 50% where the higher pass mark has been approved). This mark will be used in computing the overall mark for the course unit.
- h. All Degrees of Master will normally have exit points for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate and a Postgraduate Diploma. These will be clearly defined in terms of level of achievement and will correspond to 60 and 120 credits respectively. Students who do not achieve the required pass mark in the taught element for the Degree of Master, but who do achieve the required pass mark for a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate, may be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate, as appropriate, provided they have successfully completed the requisite number of credits including no more than the maximum number of credits allowed as APL for the exit award under 4b.
- i. Students may, in exceptional mitigating circumstances, and with prior permission of the Faculty, be allowed to re-take the entire programme subject to all outstanding fees being paid.
- j. Students may be awarded a compensated pass for a Degree of Master when they fail in units of the taught component totalling no more than 30 credits and receive a mark of at least 40% but less than 50% for those failed units. The student must also have gained an overall mark, calculated as an average of the numerical marks awarded for each unit weighted by the credits for that unit (referred to subsequently as "weighted average"), for all taught units of 50% or more in order to be granted the compensated pass.
- k. Students may be awarded a compensated pass for a Postgraduate Diploma programme when they fail in units totalling no more than 30 credits and receive a mark of at least 30% but less than 40% for those failed units. The student must also have gained an overall weighted average for all taught units of 40% or more in order to be granted the compensated pass. Where the pass

**Ordinances and Regulations:
Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
March 2010**

mark is set at 50% the compensatable units must receive a mark of at least 40% but less than 50%.

- l.** Students may be awarded a compensated pass for a Postgraduate Certificate programme when they fail in units totalling no more than 15 credits and receive a mark of at least 30% but less than 40% for those failed units. The student must also have gained an overall weighted average for all taught units of 40% or more in order to be granted the compensated pass.
 - m.** The maximum allowable cumulative failure of course units in a Masters programme at the first attempt is 45 credits of the taught component of the programme. A student whose failures in units at the first attempt exceed 45 credits will be deemed to have failed the programme.
 - n.** Students who fail in units totalling more than 45 credits at Masters level will be judged against the requirements for a pass on the Postgraduate Diploma programme. If this results in their failing units totalling fewer than or equal to 45 credits at Postgraduate Diploma level, the student may resit those units failed at Postgraduate Diploma level to obtain the award of a Postgraduate Diploma.
 - o.** Students exiting with a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate will be permitted to rescind this award and upgrade to a Masters (or Postgraduate Diploma) by successfully completing the appropriate research (or further taught) component of the programme providing the following conditions are met:

 - The rescinding occurs within five years of the original registration to the programme
 - An overall mark of 50% or above was obtained for the Postgraduate Diploma (or Postgraduate Certificate) including any capped or compensated marks in the average mark calculation.
 - p.** Faculties may allow Schools on discipline-specific grounds to adopt more stringent requirements, including (but not restricted to):

 - specifying core units for which no compensatable fail mark will be available;
 - increasing the proportion of the total credit that must reach the pass mark (ultimately to the total credits available, thus allowing no compensatable fails);
 - setting a higher pass mark overall.
- 6. Dissertation (or equivalent)**
- a.** Dissertations should be submitted in accordance with the information set out in the University's Guidance Notes for the Presentation of Dissertations.
 - b.** Dissertation (or equivalent) submission dates will normally be 51 weeks after the start of the programme and will be published in programme handbooks. Submission dates for part-time students will reflect the length of the programme (pro-rata compared to a full-time programme).
 - c.** At the recommendation of the Board of Examiners, students will normally be allowed one resubmission of a failed dissertation (or equivalent), project or

**Ordinances and Regulations:
Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
March 2010**

extended essay and this will normally be within four months of the date of the publication of the result. Resubmission will not be allowed if the mark is below 40% (where the pass mark is 50%), or 30% (where the pass mark is 40%).

- d. Students who achieve a dissertation (or equivalent) mark of at least 40% but less than 50% may accept the award of Postgraduate Diploma with no further work required or resubmit the dissertation (or equivalent) on one occasion, at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, for the award of the Degree of Master. A student achieving a mark below 50% for a resubmitted dissertation (or equivalent) will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma.
- e. The maximum mark to be awarded for resubmitted dissertation (or equivalent), project or extended essay will normally be 50% for the Degree of Master and 40% (or 50% where the pass mark is 50%) for the Postgraduate Diploma.
- f. A student may exceptionally be required to attend an examination, orally or otherwise, in the subject of their dissertation (or equivalent), project or extended essay, or a related matter.

7. Recommendation for Award

a. Pass Marks

- To obtain a pass for a Degree of Master, the student is required to obtain both a weighted average of 50% or more on the taught element (after compensation or reassessment as necessary), and 50% or more on the dissertation (or equivalent) (after reassessment as necessary).
- To obtain a pass for a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate, the student is required to obtain a weighted average of 40% or more on the taught element (after compensation or reassessment as necessary). If there is a project or extended essay a mark of 40% or more (after reassessment as necessary) on this element is also required to pass. A pass mark of 50% for a Postgraduate Diploma may be approved by the Faculty where required on discipline-specific grounds or for some professionally accredited programmes
- The Faculty will, on report from the Examiners, recommend to Senate the award of the Degree of Master or Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate for those students who have completed all requirements of the regulations and satisfied the Examiners. The awarding certificate will include the title of the programme.

b. Distinction

- A student on a Degree of Master or Postgraduate Diploma programme who has satisfied all the following criteria will be awarded a distinction:
 - A. A weighted average at first assessment of 70% or more in the taught component of the programme with no mark below 50% in any course unit.
 - B. A mark of 70% or more for the dissertation (or equivalent), project or extended essay where this is part of the programme.

**Ordinances and Regulations:
Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
March 2010**

C. A Pass at first assessment in components of the programme where only a Pass/Fail is recorded.

- Students who have been reassessed in any unit(s), or individual components of any unit(s), or have been granted a compensated pass will not be eligible for the award of distinction.
- Students on Postgraduate Certificate programmes will not be eligible for the award of distinction.

c. *Merit*

- A student on a Degree of Master or Postgraduate Diploma programme who has satisfied all the following criteria will be awarded a merit:
 - A.** A weighted average at first assessment of 60% or more in the taught component of the programme with no mark below 50% in any course units.
 - B.** A mark of 60% or more on the dissertation (or equivalent), project or extended essay where this is part of the programme.
 - C.** A Pass at first assessment in components of the programme where a Pass/Fail is recorded.
- Students who have been reassessed in any unit(s), or individual components of any unit(s), or have been granted a compensated pass, will not be eligible for the award of merit
- Students on Postgraduate Certificate programmes will not be eligible for the award of merit.

**Ordinances and Regulations:
Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
March 2010**

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Ordinances and Regulations: Degree of Master, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate
Date approved:	June 2009
Approving body:	Senate
Implementation date:	September 2009
Version:	v 2.2 (revised March 2010 re FHEQ levels)
Supersedes:	Version June 2007
Previous review dates:	August 2006, June 2007
Next review date:	tbc
Equality impact outcome	Initial screening to take place during 2010/11.
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations	Ordinances and Regulations: Undergraduate Regulations
Policy owner:	Louise Walmsley, Head of Teaching and Learning Support Office
Lead contact:	Miriam Graham, Teaching and Learning Adviser (Policies and Procedures)

Revised March 2010 to take into account amendments to the levels of credit, aligned with the QAA FHEQ.