MANCHESTER 1824
The University of Manchester

Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations

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REGULATIONS

A. Credit and Award Framework

1. All awards of the University of Manchester will be given on the basis of the accumulation of credit as mapped out in table 1 (below). This table is based on the credit/awards and levels required by the national Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ):

Table 1: Credit and Postgraduate Award framework:

Name of Award	Minimum credit for the award	ECTS	Minimum credits at the level of qualification	ECTS	FHEQ level
Masters (2 Year)	360	180	240	120	7
Masters (1 Year)	180	90	150	75	7
Postgraduate Diploma	120	60	90	45	7
Postgraduate Certificate	60	30	40	20	7
Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	60	30	40	20	7

Note 1: the table refers to the levels as defined in the FHEQ. It may be of assistance to the reader to understand that Level 7 of the FHEQ relates to a Masters programme.

Note 2: One ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) is equivalent to two UK credits.

2. All students who exit prior to completion of the programme on which they registered will receive an exit award if they have achieved the appropriate amount of credit in accordance with that award, as specified in table 1, within 5 years of their initial registration.

3. A student must achieve the minimum amount of credit at the level of the qualification in accordance with table 1. However, (subject to the programme requirements) students can take credit at a higher or lower level in order to achieve the minimum credit for the award.

B. Title of Taught Awards

4. Titles of degrees can be found in Regulation XI "Titles of Degrees and other Distinctions" in the University's General Regulations (http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=39973).

C. Accreditation of Prior Learning - AP(E)L / Rescinding Awards

5. A maximum time limit of 5 years should apply between award and consideration of AP(E)L.

6. Where the Postgraduate Certificate is a standalone programme, AP(E)L will be permitted up to a maximum of 15 credits if the award is based on a 15-credit structure, and a maximum of 20 credits if the award is based on a 20-credit structure. Where the Postgraduate Diploma is a standalone programme, AP(E)L will be permitted for up to a maximum of 45 credits. For a Masters award, the maximum amount of credits which can be permitted for AP(E)L is 60.

7. Students exiting with a Postgraduate Diploma (or Postgraduate Certificate) may be permitted to rescind this award and 'upgrade' to a Masters (or Postgraduate Diploma) by successfully completing the appropriate further component of the programme providing the following conditions are met:

    - The rescinding occurs within five years of the award, subject to the programme still being available.
    - An overall pass, at the appropriate standard to assure admission to a Masters programme, was obtained for the Postgraduate Diploma (or Postgraduate Certificate) including any capped or compensated grades.

For further guidance on rescinding awards, please see the University's *Principles on Rescinding* (see Appendix to the *Guidance on Examination Boards*).

8. Students can receive an exit award if they have AP(E)L credit in their profile, providing their performance at the University of Manchester also satisfies the award requirements in table 1: Credit and Postgraduate Award framework (see section A, page 2) and at least half of the credits have been awarded by the University of Manchester.

9. Schools may stipulate when AP(E)L is not allowed due to Professional Body requirements.

D. Assessment and Credit Accumulation

10. Where students are required to progress to a research element including a 'dissertation' or similar, the programme handbook must state the minimum requirements for progression to this element of the programme.

11. If an Examination Board has documented evidence that, (a) a student's work, attendance or engagement has been unsatisfactory, and (b) the student has been formally warned of the unsatisfactory work, attendance or engagement but has not shown significant improvement acceptable to the Board, then the Board has the right to refuse assessment. See *Regulation XX – Monitoring Attendance and Wellbeing of Students* and the *Policy on Recording and Monitoring Attendance* (http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/student-support-development/recording-attendance/).

12. Where a student has failed on the first attempt or fails to qualify for a final award after compensation, referrals or the consideration of mitigation, the Examination Board has the following option at its discretion:

    - Award Exit Award if criteria are met in accordance with table 1 (see section A, page 2).

13. Schools may have alternative assessment regulations where these are required by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) or the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

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E. Compensation and Reassessment maximums

14. Postgraduate programmes can be compensated ***up to 40 credits for PG Diploma/Masters and 20 credits for a PG Certificate (see also E16, below).***

15. Postgraduate programmes can be referred ***in up to half of the taught credits (see also E16, below);*** this includes credits on a PG Certificate or PG Diploma award. Students may also resubmit the dissertation (or equivalent, see G27) on one occasion, subject to the mark restrictions set out in G28. ***The number of credits referred and those compensated cannot exceed half the taught credits in total.***

16. The total number of credits allowable for referral for a PG Diploma/Masters is 60, of which 40 can be compensated. For a PG Certificate, the total number of credits allowable for referral is 30 credits, of which 20 can be compensated.

17. For MRes programmes (with 90 credits of taught content and 90 credits dissertation), the total number of credits allowable for referral and compensation combined is 45.

F. Compensation

18. The compensation zone is defined by the Unit Marking Scheme for Postgraduate Taught students, found in the *Guide to the Taught Degree Regulations*.

19. Compensation can only be applied up to the maximum amount specified in E14. Beyond this maximum threshold, the Examination Board will make a decision on which reassessment can be taken.

20. Schools can specify when a unit is not compensatable or when PSRB/ESFA rules take precedence.

21. Compensated credit retains the original failed mark, and this is used in the weighted average for the calculation of the final classification/ award.

22. Referral marks are compensatable.

G. Reassessment

23. Where the overall unit mark is below the compensation zone or the number of compensatable fails has been exceeded, reassessment may be taken, within the credit limitations set out in E15 to E17. Reassessment as a result of a fail is known as a 'Referral'. Subsequent attempts as a result of approved and verified mitigating circumstances are known as 'Deferrals'.

24. The reassessment must be designed to assess the achievement of the same intended learning outcomes but need not be of the same form as that originally used. The reassessment will normally take place in the same academic year as the original assessment to enable the students to progress as originally intended.

25. If an Examination Board has documented evidence that, (a) a student's work, attendance or engagement has been unsatisfactory, and (b) the student has been formally warned of the unsatisfactory work, attendance or engagement but has not shown significant improvement acceptable to the Board, then the Board has the right

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to refuse the student reassessment/referred assessment. See *Regulation XX – Monitoring Attendance and Wellbeing of Students* and the *Policy on Recording and Monitoring Attendance* (http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/student-support-development/recording-attendance/).

26. An Examination Board may allow a student one attempt, per unit, at reassessment (two attempts in total). This principle does not apply to attempts with approved and verified mitigating circumstances.

27. When the referred assessment for a postgraduate student includes independent work such as a dissertation or project resubmission, they should be permitted a reasonable amount of time within a maximum of 6 calendar months from the date of the Examination Board. This reassessment of a research/dissertation element does not contribute to the credit limitations set out in E15.

28. Students achieving a mark of less than 30 for their dissertation or project submission are not permitted to resubmit and will be given an exit award in accordance with table 1 (see section A, page 2).

29. Referral pass marks will be capped at the lowest compensatable mark for Postgraduate Taught students, unless the previous mark was within the compensation zone, in which case the original mark will stand. This mark is used in the weighted average mark for the final award. The capped mark is applied to the unit level mark, not the failed element.

30. When a student is referred and fails a unit, the first mark stands.

31. Students may, in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Examination Board, be allowed to repeat whole units or the entire programme, subject to teaching capacity not being exceeded.

H. Treatment of deferral marks

32. Where a student has been permitted a deferral (a resit as a first attempt, or 'first sit', due to approved mitigating circumstances), their original mark is annulled. The mark gained at the subsequent 'first sit' is the mark that is taken forward, whether that is lower or higher than the original mark. Deferrals are to be treated in the same way as any other 'first sit' and the Regulations applied accordingly.

I. Exit Awards

33. Once a student has exhausted all the opportunities to retrieve referred assessment, they will be given an exit award in accordance with table 1 (see section A, page 2) and as defined in the Programme Specification.

34. If a student decides to withdraw, they will automatically be awarded the relevant exit award in accordance with table 1 (section A, page 2) and as defined in the Programme Specification.

J. Classification of postgraduate taught programmes

Note: paragraph J38 should be agreed and applied consistently across a School. Approval should be sought at School and Faculty level and carefully articulated to the students within that School. For joint programmes, the 'Lead School's' model will apply.

35. For the award of pass a student must satisfy the minimum credit requirements specified in Table1 ("Credit and Postgraduate Award framework", found within paragraph 1 of Section A, Credit and Award Framework, of these Postgraduate Taught Regulations – page 2).

36. Classifications for merit and distinction will be calculated on the basis of an average mark, based on the weighted programme as a whole (See Appendix A, Table A1 – page 7).

37. In order to achieve the award of pass, merit or distinction, a student must have passed the requisite minimum credits listed in Table 1 (see section A, page 2) in accordance with the unit marking scheme and mark descriptors.

38. In addition, Schools may decide to add a further requirement to gain the award of Distinction: students must achieve an average of 70% or above in *both* the taught element and the dissertation.

39. Students with credit awarded as a result of a referral or compensated mark are eligible for the award of distinction, unless the programme has specific accreditation requirements which do not allow this. This would ensure that, if accredited bodies require that distinctions can *only* be awarded if students have no credits awarded as a result of referral or compensated marks, then this is permitted.

40. Decisions with regards to 'borderline' classifications for individual students should be resolved using the mechanisms outlined in appendix A.

K. Posthumous and Aegrotat Degrees

41. Information about the award of posthumous or aegrotat degrees can be found in the Procedures for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degrees.

L. Examination Board Arrangements

42. There are normally three available assessment opportunities: January, May/ June and Aug/September within each academic year. It is expected that all reassessment will take place in the academic year in which the assessment was first attempted, exceptions can be made for programmes with 'non-standard' admissions cycles.

43. There must be an opportunity at the end of every unit of assessment, for a chaired forum to make decisions regarding student's attainment on completed units.

44. Examination Boards, to agree student minimum requirement for the achievement of an award, will take place at appropriate points in each academic year, overseen by an External Examiner. Exceptions can be made for programmes with 'non-standard' assessment cycles.

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Appendix A: Postgraduate Degree Classification Scheme

This scheme should be used in conjunction with 'Table 1 of the Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations' (see section A, page 2). This table has been extracted from the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, and students must meet the credit requirements of Table1, prior to the classification being calculated, using the thresholds and boundaries below:

Weightings

Postgraduate degree classification for the award of merit and distinction are based on the weighted average mark across the programme calculated to one decimal place, where marks for individual course units are recorded as whole numbers (see section I).

Stage 1: Classification Thresholds and Boundaries

The following boundaries inform classification when the total points fall below a classification threshold.

Table A1 Postgraduate Masters degree classification and boundary zone using total points 0-100 mark range:

PG Degree classification- Masters based on 180 credits	Classification thresholds: average mark (mark range 0 to 100)	Boundary zone average	Boundary Zone J38 (separating the average for taught and research elements)
Distinction	70.0	68.0 to 69.9	Either taught or research is 70.0 or above, while the other is between 68.0 to 69.9
Merit	60.0	58.0 to 59.9	NA
Pass	59.9 or less providing the credit requirements of Table 1 in the 'Credit and Award Framework' have been met.	NA	NA

Consideration of postgraduate masters students within the boundary zone by mark distribution

The following process applies to reach decisions on borderline cases:

After allowances have been made for mitigating circumstances, a student whose total mark at the first assessment is within the boundary zone specified above, must be awarded the higher degree classification as long as the following criterion is satisfied (see also notes on AP(E)L):

- 2/3 of the credits[1] are equal to/ or higher than the final award.

Where Schools have decided to implement paragraph J38, after allowances have been made for mitigating circumstances, decisions at the boundary of a 'Distinction', should be made as long as all the following criteria are satisfied (see also notes on AP(E)L, section C):

- For consideration of a student in the boundary zone for the award of distinction, the student should have passed either the 'taught' **or** 'research' element at the level of a 'distinction' and the other element must be in the boundary zone, as defined in table A1 (see page 8, Stage 1: Classification Thresholds and Boundaries).
- Either the overall average is equal to or above 70.0; or 2/3 of the credits[1] are equal to or above 70.0.

Please also see paragraph J39 for details of arrangements for programmes with specific accreditation requirements.

Stage 2: Classification Review

If a student is in the boundary zone, or higher*, and does not satisfy the additional criteria, Schools may apply a further stage of 'Classification Review', with decisions supported by an External Examiner. The process of 'Classification Review' should not change unit marks and can only influence the classification awarded.

* Examination Boards may use Classification Review to consider a programme average which is higher than the boundary average, but where the student has not met the requirements for classification outlined in section H of the Regulations.

Further guidance on Classification Review can be found in the *Guide to the Taught Degree Regulations*.

Taught Masters Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate degree classification scheme using 0-100 mark range

Award of Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate certificate degree is based upon credit accumulation using a pass mark of 40% (see table 1 for credit requirements – section A, page 2) for which there is no classification other than pass/fail.

[1] Excluding AP(E)L and non-numeric pass/fail units; where there are AP(E)L or non-numeric pass/fail courses, mark distribution should be calculated based on 2/3 of the remaining credits.

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Version amendment history: Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations		
Version	**Date**	**Reason for change**
3.0	May 2012	Creation of 'New Degree Regulations'.
3.1	February 2013	• Removal of wording from paragraph 26 "When a student is referred and fails a unit *that was previously in the compensated zone,* the first mark stands."
3.2	April 2014	• New paragraph regarding the use of aegrotat degrees. • Additional wording to paragraph C7: ""The rescinding occurs within five years of the student's initial registration on their original programme, subject to the programme still being available". • Removal of the word 'just' from paragraph F25: "The capped mark is applied to the unit level mark, not (just) the failed element." • Amending of wording under 'Consideration of postgraduate masters students within the boundary zone by mark distribution'. The original wording that students whose "total mark at the first assessment is within the boundary zone specified…must be considered for the higher award." was amended to state that students must be "awarded the higher degree classification" as long as the specified requirements are satisfied.
3.4	September 2016	Version 3.3 was approved by Senate in February 2016 but superseded by version 3.4 before they were implemented. • Insertion of a new paragraph (F25) to specify that a student achieving a mark of less than 30 for a dissertation will not be permitted to resubmit. • Changing of the term 'mark review' to 'classification review'. • Insertion of additional details relating to rescinding of awards (in a renamed section C: Accreditation of Prior Learning – AP(E)L / Rescinding, page 3). • In order to match up timescales with those found in current APEL guidance, rescinding of PGT awards can now take place if the rescinding occurs within five years of the award (rather than within five years of the student's initial registration on their original programme).
3.5	September 2018	• Refusing assessment/referred assessment, paragraphs D11 and F22: clarification that Examination Boards can refuse assessment, as well as referred assessment, on the grounds of a student's work and attendance. • Use of 20 credit units, paragraph E15: the maximum number of credits which can be compensated is up to 40 credits at Masters level (rather than up to 30 credits) and up to 20 credits for a PG Certificate. • Section I on Aegrotat Degrees was updated to reference both 'Aegrotat' and 'posthumous' degrees.
3.6	February 2020	• Update to the maximum number of credits for AP(E)L onto PG Cert programmes for 20 credit units for UMW programmes. • New section combining Compensation and Reassessment maximums.

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		• Confirmation that, when considering students within the boundary zone by mark distribution, AP(E)L and non-numeric pass/fail units should not be included in the 2/3 of the remaining credits. • An addition was made to the disclaimer printed in the footnote of all pages to state that Degree Regulations variances may be in place in order to comply with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), in cases relating to Degree Apprenticeships (in addition to PSRBs). • June 2020 – updated link to General Regulation in paragraph B4.
3.7	October 2020	• Updates to section J: Posthumous and Aegrotat Degrees, to refer to new Procedures for the Award of Posthumous and Aegrotat Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Degrees.
3.8	October 2022	• Inclusion of a new section H: Treatment of deferral marks. • Amendment of paragraph I38 (new J39 in this version, relating to students being able to be awarded a distinction) if they have credits awarded as a result of referrals or compensation, unless there are programme specific accreditation requirements which do not allow this.
3.9	April 2023	• Updates to Appendix A: Postgraduate Degree Classification Scheme under the section on 'Consideration of postgraduate masters students within the boundary zone by mark distribution' to remove references to all course units having to have been passed at first attempt, when considering students in the boundary zone for the award of Distinction. This was to tie in with the update made in October 2022 in paragraph J39.
3.9	April 2025	• Hyperlinks updated

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Related Procedures and Guidance:	Guide to the Taught Degree Regulations Guide to Taught Degree Regulations and Taught Degree Regulations Glossary of Terms
Policy owner:	Head of Student and Academic Services
Lead contact:	Teaching and Learning Manager (Policy and Degree Apprenticeships), Division of SAS

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