

Postgraduate Degree Regulations

VERSION: 3.5, September 2018 - for all Postgraduate Taught students registered from 2016 onwards

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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 the University's General Regulations: [Regulation XI Titles of Degrees and other Distinctions](#).

Note: Faculty approved variances to the Degree Regulations will be described within the Programme Handbooks. Where they exist they will take precedence, for example, in order to comply with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

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. 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 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).

E. Compensation

14. The compensation zone is defined by the Unit Marking Scheme for Postgraduate Taught students, found in the *Guide to the Taught Degree Regulations* (<http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/degree-regulations/supporting-documents/guide-to-degree-regs/>).
15. PGT programmes can be compensated up to 40 credits for PG Diploma/Masters and 20 credits for a PG Certificate. Please note that 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.
16. Compensation can only be applied up to the maximum amount specified in E15. Beyond this maximum threshold, the Examination Board will make a decision on which reassessment can be taken.
17. Schools can specify when a unit is not compensatable or when PSRB rules take precedence.
18. Compensated credit retains the original failed mark and this is used in the weighted average for the calculation of the final classification/ award.
19. Referral marks are compensatable.

F. Reassessment

20. 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 F24. 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'.
21. 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.
22. 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 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/>).

23. 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.
24. Postgraduate programmes can be referred in up to half of the taught credits; this includes credits on a PG Certificate or PG Diploma award. Students may also resubmit the dissertation (or equivalent, see F 25) on one occasion, subject to the mark restrictions set out in F26. The number of credits referred and those compensated cannot exceed half the taught credits in total.
25. 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 F24.
26. 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).
27. 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.
28. When a student is referred and fails a unit, the first mark stands.
29. 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.

G. Exit Awards

30. 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.
31. 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.

H. Classification of postgraduate taught programmes

Note: H35 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.

32. 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).

Note: Faculty approved variances to the Degree Regulations will be described within the Programme Handbooks. Where they exist they will take precedence, for example, in order to comply with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

33. 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).
34. 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.
35. 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.
36. Students with credit awarded as a result of a referral or compensated mark will not be eligible for the award of distinction, only a merit or a pass.
37. Decisions with regards to 'borderline' classifications for individual students should be resolved using the mechanisms outlined in appendix A.

I. Posthumous and Aegrotat Degrees

38. A Postgraduate Taught degree may be awarded in the event of the death of a candidate prior to the completion of their degree (posthumous degree). For more information about posthumous degrees and the options open to Examination Boards, please see: <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/teaching-and-learning/teaching/posthumous-awards/>
39. A Postgraduate Taught degree may be awarded should the candidate be prevented from completing their degree due to the diagnosis of a terminal or debilitating illness (aegrotat degree). The Examination Board may determine from evidence available to it that a candidate for a Postgraduate Taught degree who has been prevented by good cause from completing the final examination or assessment will be awarded a class of degree the Board judges to be suitable, as long as the candidate has gained over half the credits required for the award.

J. Examination Board Arrangements

40. 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.
41. 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.
42. 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.

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 Table 1, 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 H).

Stage 1: Classification Thresholds and Boundaries

The following boundaries inform classification when the total points falls 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 H35 (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 both the following criteria are satisfied (see also notes on AP(E)L):

Note: Faculty approved variances to the Degree Regulations will be described within the Programme Handbooks. Where they exist they will take precedence, for example, in order to comply with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

- For the award of distinction, all course units must have been passed at the first attempt without any compensation.
- 120 out of 180 credits are equal to/ or higher than the final award.

Where Schools have decided to implement H35, 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).
- All course units must have been passed at the first attempt without any compensation.
- Either the overall average is equal to or above 70.0; or 120 out of 180 credits are equal to or above 70.0.

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.

Note: Faculty approved variances to the Degree Regulations will be described within the Programme Handbooks. Where they exist they will take precedence, for example, in order to comply with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

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Lead contact:	Emma Hilton Wood, Head of Academic Policy