Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS: REVISED ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS AND POLICY

1. The following assessment regulations and policy were approved by Senate in July 2018 and will apply to all programmes in 2019/20 with the exception of those listed under item 2 below.

2. Regulations 14.2, 14.3, 17.12, 18.2 and 18.4 will not apply to the following programmes in 2019/20:

   MSc Art Psychotherapy (International)
   MSc Music Therapy
   MSc/PgDip Occupational Therapy (Pre-Registration)

   The programmes listed above will continue to follow the regulations dated August 2017 in terms of reassessments.

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS AND POLICY

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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 and policy provide the structure within which students shall be assessed and whereby their assessment contributes to the achievement of the award.

1.2   These regulations and policy shall govern all taught programmes which lead to a University award except where Senate shall determine otherwise.

1.3   Within the regulations and policy levels one, two, three and four refer to the full-time year of undergraduate study. SCQF levels refer to the academic level of study (for undergraduate programmes this is typically SCQF level 7 to 10 and for postgraduate programmes SCQF level 11). Levels one, two, three and four do **not** map directly onto SCQF levels, but the following will apply to the majority of modules:

Level one (first year of undergraduate study)	SCQF level 7
Level two (second year of undergraduate study)	SCQF level 8
Level three (third year of undergraduate study)	SCQF level 9
Level four (fourth year of undergraduate study)	SCQF level 10
Postgraduate	SCQF level 11

 For a part-time undergraduate student, a level typically spans more than a single academic year.

1.4   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 regulations and policy.

1.5   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](#).

1.6   An award will be conferred upon satisfaction of the following conditions:

- the candidate was a registered student of the University at the time of their 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.

1.7   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.

1.8   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.

1.9   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 these assessment regulations and 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.

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 and feedforward to students on their performance on a programme of study which promotes learning and encourages reflection;
- provides meaningful information to employers, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies 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 and policy establish a framework for the conduct of assessment across all taught programmes.

4.2   Assessment regulations and policy 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 and policy 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 and policy are 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, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.

4.5   Programme assessment strategies are designed to assess all intended learning outcomes but should reduce the extent 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, and any subsequent updates to that Chapter.

4.7   QMU is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity. Assessment regulations and procedures are designed to actively promote equality of opportunity, and to be compliant with all relevant equality legislation.

4.8   QMU subscribes to the principle of anonymous marking. Anonymous marking shall be used in assessments wherever practicable. 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.

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 accredited and experiential learning as set out in the University's Guidance on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

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, as a means of communicating the achievement by a student.

4.13   All modules which are designed to lead to the award of academic credit are expressed in terms of learning outcomes that are capable of assessment and 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 come under the purview of a Board of Examiners and are 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 student transcript.

4.16   Module descriptors 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. This digital copy acts 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 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 are usually completed electronically and must be scanned instead, if handwritten. Standard feedback may be provided to the full cohort for an examination. However all students also have the right to request individual feedback from the Module Co-ordinator.

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 SCQF 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   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. A single agreed mark is provided to the student as an outcome of the above procedures.

5.4   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.

5.5   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.

5.6   Internal moderation

5.6.1   All elements of assessments for Honours projects and postgraduate dissertations (or equivalent) at SCQF levels 9, 10, 11and 12 must be blind double-marked for the whole cohort.

5.6.2   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.

5.7   External Examiner moderation

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

5.7.2   External Examiners will normally only be required to moderate samples for an individual module once per academic year. They will not normally be required to moderate samples for reassessments or multiple occurrences of the module provided the mode of assessment and marking team remain unchanged from the original assessment. The Board of Examiners will determine whether the External Examiner will be required to moderate additional samples for reassessment or an additional occurrence of the module.

5.7.3   It is the responsibility of the Module Co-ordinator to select the sample to be reviewed by the External Examiner. This need not be the same sample used for internal moderation.

5.7.4   Further information on External Examiner arrangements for collaborative programmes can be found in the Collaborations Manual.

5.7.5   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 review 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   Responsibility for assessment

5.8.1   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 through the Programme Committee. Deans of School have responsibility for assessment regulations and policy and staff development (as it affects assessment) within the parameters set by the University and any relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies. It is expected, however, that this responsibility will be delegated to Heads of Division.

5.8.2   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 specifies 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 module descriptors and the method of attributing marks to each module should be clearly defined.

6.4   At 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   The University operates a Student Attendance Policy which can be found at:

https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/committees-regulations-policies-and-procedures/regulations-policies-and-procedures/

Additional attendance and participation conditions may be in place for some programmes, but must be made clear to students. Implications of non-attendance in terms of eligibility to undertake assessments must also be made clear. These must be approved through the University's validation and review process or committee structure as appropriate.

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.

The full range of marks should be used in accordance with the grade descriptors in Appendix E.

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

Grade	Mark	Corresponding level in an Honours degree classification
A*	80% - 100%	first class
A	70% - 79.9%	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% - 100%	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 specific 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%.

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 University's Registration Regulations.

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 of which a minimum of 100 are at SCQF level 7 or higher
Dip HE	240 credit points of which a minimum of 100 are at SCQF level 8 or higher
Degree	360 credit points of which a minimum of 100 are at SCQF level 9 or higher
Honours Degree	480 credit points of which a minimum of 220 are at SCQF level 9 and 10, including at least 100 at level 10
Graduate Certificate	60 credit points, at minimum of SCQF level 9
Graduate Diploma	120 credit points, at minimum of SCQF level 9
Postgraduate Certificate	60 credit points of which a minimum of 40 are at SCQF level 11 and no credits below SCQF level 10
Postgraduate Diploma	120 credit points of which a minimum of 100 are at SCQF level 11 and no credits below SCQF level 10
Masters Degree	180 credit points of which a minimum of 160 are at SCQF level 11 and no credits below SCQF level 10
Integrated Masters	600 credit points of which a minimum of 120 are at SCQF level 11

Students may take credits from the SCQF level directly above or directly below subject to the guidance set out above and as defined in relevant documentation Ten SCQF Credits are equivalent to five 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 SCQF level 9 (20%) and SCQF level 10 (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 at SCQF levels 9 and 10. Any modules undertaken below SCQF level 9 and any modules taken whilst on an exchange arrangement will not be counted towards the Honours calculation.

Where a student has accumulated more than 120 credits at SCQF level 10, a maximum of 120 credits will be counted at SCQF level 10 for the purpose of the Honours calculation. All core modules at SCQF level 10 will count towards the Honours classification. The optional modules in which the student achieved the highest marks will be included in the calculation of the Honours classification. Additional optional modules at SCQF level 10 with lower marks will be counted towards SCQF level 9.

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 120 credits (or equivalent) at SCQF level 9 or above is 65% or higher. Any modules undertaken below SCQF level 9 and any modules taken whilst on an exchange arrangement will not be counted towards the distinction calculation.

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) - is 70% or over.
A merit is granted automatically if the weighted average mark (each module being weighted in relation to its size) - is 60% or over.

Only modules undertaken at SCQF level 11 will be used in the calculation for distinction or merit.

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 grades achieved during level four studies.

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 SCQF level and where marks are available. Otherwise the classification will be based on grades gained entirely within the University. Any modules taken whilst on an exchange arrangement will not be counted towards the classification.

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 all SCQF level 10 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 SCQF level 9 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 SCQF level 11 credits contributing to the Programme.

10.3   For standard 180 credit Masters programmes, borderline cases where 90 credits or more (core or elective modules) at SCQF level 11 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) at SCQF level 11 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) at SCQF level 11 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) at SCQF level 11 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 at SCQF level 11 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 at SCQF level 11 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 two thirds 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.

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.

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

Decisions made in the 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 and transfer between modules

12.1   A student withdrawing from a module up to the point at which 25% of the taught duration of the module has been delivered may provide the Module Co-ordinator with a written explanation of reasons for withdrawal. If the Module Co-ordinator accepts these as valid reasons, 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 taught duration will be recorded as a fail.

12.3   A student wishing to transfer from one elective module to another will normally be permitted to do so within the first 25% of the taught duration of the module subject to the consent of both Module Co-ordinators. Only exceptionally will students be permitted to transfer between elective modules after this period.

13.1   **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;
- 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.

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

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

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 be reassessed in an assessment component which has been failed. The timing of the reassessment is at the discretion of the Board of Examiners but must allow the student sufficient time to prepare. Normally reassessment (as a second attempt) happens within the same academic year or shortly thereafter.

A student will be permitted a maximum of three attempts at any module. i.e. attempt one plus two reassessment attempts. Attempt three may be undertaken in the following academic year subject to progression regulations.

14.3 Condonement of a module

Condonement of a module may occur where a student has not achieved a minimum pass mark in an undergraduate module at SCQF level 7 or SCQF level 8 and there are no programme specific assessment regulations that require the student to be reassessed.

15.0 Programme specific regulations

15.1 It is expected that programme specific regulations will be consistent with the University's general assessment regulations.

Programmes may only apply more specific regulations where it is an explicit requirement of a professional body or where an explicit justification has been

given as part of the formal validation process . Any exceptions must be approved through the validation or committee approval process and be clearly recorded in the programme document or relevant module descriptor.

Programme specific 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 may cover the following points:

- the requirements for passing a module;
- modules which are not eligible for condonement
- 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 level;
- the conditions under which a student shall be required to withdraw from the programme.

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 unless otherwise specified in the programme document or module descriptor. To pass a postgraduate module, a student must obtain at least 50% overall, and at least 40% in each component of assessment unless otherwise specified in the programme document or module descriptor. This regulation applies to the first attempt at the module only. Regulations for reassessment of modules are detailed below and in 14.2 above.

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 or third attempt, the maximum mark that can be achieved for the module is 40%. Where

a student is reassessed in a postgraduate module at a second or third attempt, 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.

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 the student's 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. Boards of Examiners may condone one failed 20 credit module per level at the first attempt for students at level one and level two (SCQF level 7 and 8) of an undergraduate programme, provided that a minimum overall mark of at least 37% has been achieved in the failed module and no individual component of assessment within the module falls below the minimum compensation level. The result will show as a condoned fail on the academic transcript and the student will be given credit for the module. Students who have failed more than 20 credits must undertake reassessments of all failed modules in the first instance. Once reassessment results are known, condonement may still be applied to one 20 credit module, provided that a minimum overall mark of at least 37% has been achieved in the failed module and no individual component of assessment within the module falls below the minimum compensation level and the student has no further failed modules on their profile.

Programme specific regulations may exempt some modules from eligibility for condonement.

A condoned fail will not affect any subsequent module selections.

17.5 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.

17.6 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 more than 50 credits and less than 80 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

17.7 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.

17.8 The only decisions available to the Board of Examiners on progress and award shall be:

- Continue – passed all assessments

- Required to be reassessed in the failed module(s) before continuing

- Continue – but required to be reassessed in the failed/deferred module(s) in next academic year

- Offered opportunity to repeat the entire level in next academic year before continuing

- Offered opportunity to be reassessed in next academic year as a part-time student before continuing

- Continue in part time registration (applies to part-time students only)

- No reassessment allowed – required to withdraw from course

- Decision deferred – outstanding assessments as a first attempt

- Decision deferred – outstanding reassessments

- Progress to placement

- Recommendation to Senate for specific awards

17.9   Undergraduate programmes of study are designed on four levels, normally 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.

17.10   Full-time undergraduate students may not normally proceed to level four study unless they are eligible for the award of an Ordinary Degree. Exceptionally, a student may be able to progress to level four study when falling short by only 20 credit points.

17.11   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 17.12 and 17.13

e) fails the dissertation on two attempts

17.12 A postgraduate student will normally be permitted a reassessment attempt in up to two thirds of the taught modules on a programme. Should a student be unsuccessful at attempt two, they may be permitted a further reassessment attempt in a maximum of one third of the taught modules on a programme. Should a student breach these reassessment thresholds, they will be required to withdraw from the programme. A maximum of two attempts will be permitted for the Masters project/dissertation.

17.13 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. Programme specific regulations defined to meet the requirements of Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies should be approved by the validation panel, or through the relevant committee.

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.

1. 18.2 The Board of Examiners may at its discretion allow an undergraduate student to be re-assessed in up 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 two thirds of the taught modules on a programme as a second attempt, and one third as a third attempt.

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. Reassessment can take the form of a reworking or a new assessment, as determined by the Board of Examiners.

18.4   Normally, a student may not be given more than three attempts at any module.

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 second attempt assessments shall normally 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 summer/autumn. Students cannot request an extraordinary exam sitting. Third attempt assessments may be required to be undertaken in the following academic year.

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, a student must achieve at least 30% in each reassessed component and a weighted average of at least 40%. To pass a postgraduate module at reassessment, a student 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 cause, shall be allowed to take the assessment, and it shall be treated as a first assessment, subject to the reason for absence or poor performance being acceptable to the Board of Examiners or the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

19.0   Assessment of students with a disability and of students whose first language is not English

19.1   Students with a disability

19.1.1 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 Co-ordinator) will be detailed within an Individual Learning Plan.

19.1.2 Arrangements for the assessment of students with a disability 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.

19.1.3 Further information can be found about the Disability Service on the University's website.

19.2   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.

20.0   Penalties for word limits and late submission of assessment

20.1   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.

20.2 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.

20.3 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, as a first attempt, after the deadline but up to and including six 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, as a first attempt, seven days or more (including on the 7th day after the submission deadline) a mark of 0% will be awarded

Example (first attempt)

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

- if submitted after the submission deadline in a second or third attempt assessment, a mark of 0% will be awarded.

PART D RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

21.0   Student responsibility in assessment

21.1   It is the responsibility of students to:

- familiarise themselves with the regulations for their programme. Students should consult their Programme 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 programme;
- 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 School Office in the first instance. 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.

21.2   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.

21.3   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.

21.4   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. 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.

21.5   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 their 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.

21.6   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.

21.7   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.

22.0   Responsibility of other individuals and bodies in assessment

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

- the development of assessment regulations and policy;

- monitoring the use of these regulations and policy by the Schools;
- periodically reviewing and revising these regulations and policy.

22.2   The **Deans of School** have responsibility for ensuring that:

- programmes within that School conform to these regulations and 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 these regulations and policy;
- issues arising through the implementation of these regulations and policy are conveyed to the Student Experience Committee.

22.3   **Programme Leaders** have 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.

Programme Leaders have delegated authority from Deans, and work in partnership with Heads of Division, to oversee the management of their programmes.

22.4   **Module Co-ordinators (with appropriate academic staff)** have the responsibility for:

- designing assessments that both conform to these regulations and 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;

- providing feedback on summative assessment in accordance with the timescales specified in regulation 4.17. 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.

- 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. Where a student has been granted an extension, the timescale for receiving feedback will be adjusted accordingly. 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 seven days before the original deadline for receipt of feedback.

- attending Boards of Examiners for the presentation of their module results.

23.0   Project supervision

23.1   All project supervision meetings with undergraduate and taught postgraduate 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. Arrangements for doctoral candidate supervision records are set out in the University's PhD and Professional Doctorate Regulations.

23.2   The time allocated to supervision of Honours 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. Guidance on the time allocation for postgraduate project and dissertation supervision is available in the relevant programme documentation.

23.3   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.

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

24.0   Academic dishonesty and plagiarism

24.1   Introduction

24.1.1 The University'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.

24.1.2 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 their own.

24.1.3 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.

24.1.4 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.

24.2 Referencing

Students' attention is drawn to the guide to referencing available at:
http://libguides.qmu.ac.uk/referencing

24.3 Prevention

24.3.1 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 postdoctoral candidates, by its inclusion in the Research Degrees Code of Practice/Doctoral Student Handbooks (PhD and Professional Doctorate).

24.3.2 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.

24.3.3 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.

24.3.4 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.

24.4   Identifying, reporting and investigating

Procedures for identifying, reporting and investigating plagiarism are published separately in the University's Plagiarism Policy.

PART E APPENDICES

UNDERGRADUATE DESCRIPTORS

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

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.