

**UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX  
GRADUATE SCHOOL**

**RULES OF ASSESSMENT FOR POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMAS 2010/11  
(where offered as a stand-alone award)**

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**1. PREAMBLE**

These rules apply to full-time (9 months) postgraduate diploma courses. The rules should be read in conjunction with the relevant Programme Structure, Programme Specification and on-line Module Directory entries. The Module Directory will give detail of assessment arrangements. The Programme Structure will identify which modules are core for the Course.

A taught module is any assessed component excluding the dissertation. A core module must be taken as part of the programme structure and passed, with no condonement of marks below a pass allowed.

A Postgraduate Diploma can be awarded with distinction if the student has registered for this award at the outset (but not for an exit award). Some stand alone diplomas may also be awarded with merit.

It is for the Board of Examiners to determine whether the criteria for an award have been satisfied.

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**2. PASS MARK**

The pass mark for all components of the postgraduate diploma is 50.

For the purposes of these rules taught module averages and the overall weighted average for the taught modules -will be rounded to the nearest whole number – i.e. 49.5 will count as 50, 49.4 as 49.

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**3. ELIGIBILITY FOR AN AWARD**

**3.1 THE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA**

**Pass**

To be awarded a pass in the Postgraduate Diploma a student should:

- (a) Subject to (d), obtain 120 credits at Masters level.
- (b) Pass all the taught core modules .
- (c) Pass at least 60 taught module credits at the first attempt unless there are substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners.
- (d) Failure with a mark of 40 or more for up to 30 credits in non-core taught modules, will be condoned provided the overall weighted average for the course is 50.

### **A Pass with Merit or Distinction**

Results for a Pass with Merit or Distinction are calculated by two methods, known as 'Dominant Quality' and 'Arithmetic Average'. Students will receive the more favourable result of the two.

#### **Pass with Merit**

##### *Dominant Quality*

To obtain a merit a student should:

- (a) Obtain 120 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- (b) Obtain 80 credits at 60 or above;
- (c) Have no module mark below 50.

##### *Arithmetic Average*

To obtain a merit a student should:

- (a) Obtain 120 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- (b) Obtain 60 credits at 60 or above;
- (c) Have an overall weighted average mark of 60 or more;
- (d) Have no module mark below 50.

#### **Pass with Distinction**

##### *Dominant Quality*

To obtain a distinction a student should:

- (a) Obtain 120 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- (b) Obtain 80 credits at 70 or above;
- (c) Have no module mark below 50.

##### *Arithmetic Average*

To obtain a distinction a student should:

- (a) Obtain 120 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- (b) Obtain 60 credits at 70 or above;
- (c) Have an overall weighted average mark of 70 or more;
- (d) Have no module mark below 50.

### **3.2 THE POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE**

Where a student is either unable to complete their studies or does not achieve the required credits to be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma, then the award of a Postgraduate Certificate will be considered.

Departments will identify on the published programme structure which taught modules have to be passed in order to obtain a Postgraduate Certificate.

### **Pass**

The pass mark for all Postgraduate Certificate modules is 50.

To be awarded a pass in the Postgraduate Certificate a student should:

- (a) Subject to (d), obtain 60 taught module credits at Masters level.
- (b) Pass all taught core modules.
- (c) Pass 15 credits at the first attempt.
- (d) Failure with a mark of 40 or more for up to 20 credits, in non-core modules, will be condoned.

Dissertation credits **cannot** be used to obtain a Postgraduate Certificate.

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## **4. SECOND ATTEMPTS**

- (a) Students may have a second attempt for module(s) that have been failed, up to a maximum of 40 taught module credits.
- (b) No second attempt at the assessment for a module is permitted prior to the Board of Examiners meeting where marks are confirmed and is subject to departmental arrangements (see below).
- (c) The maximum mark that will be recorded for a module as a result of a second attempt is 50, unless there are substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners.
- (d) The mark for the second attempt will count even where it is lower than the original mark.

If a student fails a module on the second attempt at the assessment no further attempt is allowed unless there are substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners.

Where the Board of Examiners permits a student to have a second attempt at the assessment for a module this only applies to any individual assignment/examination for the module that has been failed. A student cannot be permitted to retake a module unless permitted by the Board of Examiners because of substantiated extenuating circumstances.

When a student is required to resubmit work as a result of an academic offence, this should count as a second attempt. This meaning that the student would not be eligible for a merit or distinction. If the student fails the module after having had this reassessment opportunity s/he should not be permitted further reassessment.

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## **5. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES**

### **5.1 POWERS OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS**

A Board of Examiners Meeting shall be held with the purpose of:

- (a) Confirming the taught module marks achieved to date, including any resit marks presented to the Board, and awarding credit.
- (b) Confirming any opportunities for second attempts at the assessment for modules.
- (c) Considering extenuating circumstances as necessary and their implications for results.
- (d) Determining the award of any Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate.
- (e) Requiring any student whose performance is below that required to achieve an award to withdraw

## **5.2 EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

Extenuating circumstances can only be considered by the Examination Board if the student has submitted an extenuating circumstances form by the agreed deadline. When substantiated extenuating circumstances are accepted by the Board of Examiners it may use its discretion to depart from the above rules where this is necessary to achieve a fair result.

## **5.3. DISCRETION**

Except in the case of extenuating circumstances (see 5.2 above), the Board of Examiners should restrict its use of discretion to exceptional circumstances. Where the Board of Examiners agrees to exercise its discretion the reasons must be documented as part of the Examination Board report, setting out the decision taken and the reason for exercising discretion, and a copy sent to the Graduate School.

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**End**

**SENATE APRIL 2010**