

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX
UNDERGRADUATE RULES OF ASSESSMENT
Academic Year 2015-2016

Undergraduate Rules of Assessment – Appendix B

Glossary of Terms

Award

Also referred to as **Programme**

A qualification conferred upon a student who has achieved the intended learning outcomes and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for the award. Awards may be divided into modules, units or elements at various levels and with different volumes of study, each of which has attached to it intended learning outcomes and academic standards to be achieved by students in order to receive the final award.

Capped Mark

Limited to the pass mark of 40%. Following reassessment, where work has been re-submitted and/or a resit examination has been taken, only the module aggregate will be capped at 40.

Classification of awards

At the completion of a programme of study, an award will normally be given a classification indicating the level of achievement which the student has demonstrated overall. This may be indicated by a numeric classification (e.g. 2.1, 2.2) or by terms such as 'pass', 'merit' or 'distinction'.

Cohort

The name given to the group of students who enter a stage of a course in a given academic year. For example, students who join the University in Stage One of a course in 12/13 will be governed by the rules of assessment which apply to that cohort of students if they progress through their studies without interruption. However, if an individual student interrupts their studies through intermission or has to repeat a period of study, they will then be assessed by the rules which apply to the new cohort they are joining. For example, if a student entered Stage One of a course in 12/13 but has to repeat Stage One in 13/14 on a full-time basis s/he will then be assessed by the rules of assessment which apply to the cohort who entered Stage One in 13/14.

If the University approves changes to the Rules of Assessment they may be approved for implementation for all students or it may be specified that they are only to take effect from a particular cohort of students.

Condonement

Following a re-sit/re-submission, where a student has not redeemed a fail, they may still proceed to the next stage. The amount of credit which may be condoned is specified for each award. The Rules of Assessment require that a student "attempts" all the credits for each stage. This means that a student must have completed and been assessed for each module.

Core Module

A core module is a module that must be taken and passed in order to progress to the next stage of study. Students cannot fail a core module.

Credit

Credit is an indicator of equivalence of workload. Credit value attaches to learning outcomes, and the achievement of these outcomes (evidenced by gaining at least a pass mark in the required assessments) allows the award of credit. For this reason, a credit rating is attached to each module, and these accumulate to allow awards (evidence of both volume and level of study) to be made.

(Note that marks above a pass mark do not affect the award of credit, but do determine the award classification (e.g. 2.2, Merit, etc.)

Credits are also transportable and can be transferred between institutions, according to their rules of assessment.

Learning Outcomes

These identify what a successful student is expected to know and understand, together with the skills that they should be able to demonstrate on successful completion of the award.

Learning outcomes can be attached to both modules and awards.

Level

This is an expression of the intellectual demands placed on the learner at different Stages of study, or the difficulty of the concepts to be engaged with and skills required at each Stage.

If qualifications share the same level this means that they are broadly similar in terms of the demand they place on the learner. Information in Programme Specifications and modules will be expressed in terms of levels.

Broadly speaking Level 4 equates to Stage One, Level 5 equates to Stage Two, and Level 6 equates to Stage Three.

TABLE 4

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications levels (FHEQ)		Types of award	National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels
1 Certificate	C level	Certificates of Higher Education	4
2 Intermediate	I level	Foundation degrees, ordinary (Bachelors) degrees, Diplomas of Higher Education and other higher diplomas	4, 5
3 Honours	H level	Bachelors degrees with Honours, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas	4-6

Module Status

A module is a unit of study complete in itself, with a unique set of learning outcomes and credits attached to it. Usually, several modules are combined to lead to an award. A module may be given one of three designations: ‘core’ – meaning it must be taken **and passed**, ‘compulsory’ – meaning it must be taken, or ‘optional’ – meaning that students can choose which module to study. Students cannot fail a ‘core’ module. The number of modules at each Stage of undergraduate study ranges from 4 to 8, and students are awarded credit when they have achieved the learning outcomes within a module.

Outside Option

A module taken as part of a programme of study which is not run by the student's main department, or by either of the departments contributing to a joint programme. This is normally taken in the first Stage of study. The module will be among several optional modules which can be taken as part of the award. There are exceptional modules which can be regarded as outside options regardless of whether or not they lie within the student's department(s), namely CS101, MA123 and LG and LA modules.

Part-time study

Programmes of study are designated as full-time or part-time. In some cases students who are enrolled on full-time programmes may be given the opportunity by the Board of Examiners to retrieve failure in assessment by studying modules again on a part-time basis. In the rules of assessment this is referred to as repeating the stage of study part-time. (See 'Repeat Stage' below) As International student are not permitted by the Home office to study part-time, this option is only permissible where the student's UK immigration status allows part-time study.

Placement

The University operates a range of work-based learning/placement arrangements where students will study for a period of time outside the University in order to achieve learning outcomes defined by the Programme which cannot otherwise be achieved, for example for practice-based Health or Project Management awards, or study abroad years. Learning opportunities are provided by an outside placement provider, working in conjunction with the University.

Programme

See under **Award**.

Programme Specification

A document that defines the learning outcomes and structure associated with a course.

PSB/PSRB – Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies

Discipline-based professional bodies and associations which regulate and accredit qualifications which relate to their own standards and/or Continuing Professional Development professional requirements.

Some courses subject to accreditation by PSRBs, for example:

Law - Solicitors Regulation Authority/Bar Council;

CES – Institution of Engineering and Technology, and British Computer Society

East 15 - National Council for Drama Training

The courses involved have had variations to the standard Rules of Assessment approved to take account of these PSRB requirements.

Preliminary Stage

Students enrolled on a preliminary year are undertaking a preparatory year, enabling them to become familiar with a discipline which they may not have previously studied, before joining a three-year course.

Reinstating the Mark for the First Attempt

An undergraduate Exam Board will reinstate the module mark for a previous attempt at a failed module if it is higher than the mark for the most recent attempt. This will not apply where students are repeating an entire stage for uncapped marks. In such cases the marks achieved at the end of the repeat stage will stand.

Example Scenarios:

- (1) If a student fails in June and takes a resit in September the higher of the two module marks will count. If the same student fails again in September and has to repeat the whole year, on a full-time basis, the marks for the repeat year will count even if they are lower than the previous Stage marks.
- (2) If a student fails in June and has to repeat the year (without having any September resits), the marks for the repeat year will count even if they are lower than the previous Stage marks. If the same student fails the year again, and is offered September resits, the repeat year marks from June in the current year can be reinstated if they are higher than September.

Repeat Stage

The term “repeat Stage” (or “repeat year”) refers to the repeat of a Stage of study whether full-time, or part-time, before progression to the next Stage is allowed.

Students repeating study part-time will carry forward marks from passed modules and repeat failed modules only, which are capped.

Students repeating study full-time will take all the modules that are compulsory for the course for uncapped marks. The marks obtained during a repeat year will stand even if they are lower than the previous year.

Resit/Resubmission of Coursework Without Attendance

An Exam Board may offer resits or resubmission of coursework without attendance as an alternative to a repeat year.

Stage

A Stage of study is a unit of learning following which assessment will be scrutinised by an examination board, and marks confirmed or an award made. The most usual “Stage” of study for undergraduates at Essex is one year of full-time study.

Voluntary Reassessment

The Examination Board may offer reassessment in an exam and/or coursework for a failed module even where it is not compulsory for the student to pass the module. Voluntary reassessment provides students with an opportunity to obtain the maximum credit available for the Stage.