

**UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX ONLINE (Kaplan Open Learning)**  
**VARIATIONS TO TAUGHT MASTERS DEGREES**  
**(Academic Year 2014/15 onwards)**

**1 PREAMBLE**

- a) These rules apply to online part-time Masters courses delivered by the University of Essex Online. The rules should be read in conjunction with the relevant Programme Structure and Programme Specifications. Approved module outlines provide detail of assessment arrangements. The Programme Structure will identify which modules are core for the Course.
- b) 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.
- c) All Masters degrees can be awarded with distinction or merit.
- d) It is for the Board of Examiners to determine whether the criteria for an award have been satisfied.
- e) Students will be considered under the Rules that are current at the time that the Exam Board meets.

**In the event that a student does not complete a module that they have started**

- f) if a module is substantially incomplete (usually no more than 4 weeks completed study) and a Leave of Absence has been agreed:
    - i) The module will not be treated as a fail.
    - ii) Marks earned in the first 4 weeks of the module cannot be reinstated when the module is started for a second time. Work submitted during the first period of study cannot be re-submitted when the module is restarted.
  - g) If a module is substantially complete (usually more than 4 weeks completed study) or a Leave of Absence has not been agreed, marks for the module will be considered by the Exam Board in the normal way.
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**2 PASS MARK**

- a) The pass mark for all modules of the Masters degree is 50. Credits are only awarded if the module is passed. In cases where failure with a mark of 40 is condoned, the credits are not awarded.
  - b) For the purposes of these rules taught module averages, the overall weighted average for the taught modules and the mark for the dissertation 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

#### THE MASTERS DEGREE

##### Pass

To be awarded a pass in the Masters a student should:

- a) Subject to (d), obtain 180 credits at Masters level (level 7).
- b) Pass all the taught core modules and the dissertation.
- 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 40 credits in non-core taught modules, will be condoned provided the overall weighted average for all the taught modules is 50.

##### 3.1 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.

###### 3.1.1 Pass with Merit

###### a) *Dominant Quality*

To obtain a merit a student should:

- i) Obtain 180 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 120 credits at 60 or above, which must include the dissertation;
- iii) Have no module mark below 50.

###### b) *Arithmetic Average*

To obtain a merit a student should:

- i) Obtain 180 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 90 credits at 60 or above, which must include the dissertation;
- iii) Have an overall weighted average mark of 60 or more;
- iv) Have no module mark below 50.

###### 3.1.2 Pass with Distinction

###### a) *Dominant Quality*

To obtain a distinction a student should:

- i) Obtain 180 credits at the first attempt, except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 120 credits at 70 or above, which must include the dissertation;
- iii) Have no module mark below 50.

###### b) *Arithmetic Average*

To obtain a distinction a student should:

- i) Obtain 180 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 90 credits at 70 or above, which must include the dissertation;
- iii) Have an overall weighted average mark of 70 or more;
- iv) Have no module mark below 50.

## 3.2 THE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA and CERTIFICATE

Where a student is either unable to complete their studies or does not achieve the required credits to be awarded a Masters, then the award of either a Postgraduate Diploma or 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 PG Certificate or PG Diploma. In many cases it will be possible to obtain the necessary credits for a PG Diploma by using dissertation credits as well as taught module credits.

### 3.2.1 To be awarded a **POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA** a student should:

- a) Normally complete and have been assessed for all the taught Masters modules
- b) Subject to (e), obtain 120 credits at Masters level (level 7).
- c) Pass at least 60 taught module credits at the first attempt.
- d) Pass all taught core modules.
- e) Failure with a mark of 40 or more for up to 30 credits in non-core modules will be condoned provided that the overall weighted average for the 120 PG Diploma credits is 50.

Credits obtained for the dissertation can be used when considering whether a Postgraduate Diploma can be awarded, provided that the above criteria have been met.

### 3.2.2 To be awarded a **POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE** a student should:

- a) Subject to (d), obtain 60 taught module credits at Masters level (level 7)
- 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

### 4.1 Second attempts at the assessment for taught modules

- a) Students may have a second attempt for module(s) that have been failed, up to a maximum of 60 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.

**4.1.2** 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.

**4.1.3** 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.

**4.1.4** When a student is given an academic offences penalty of resubmitting work for credit purposes only with a mark of zero to be retained for all calculations, the raw mark achieved for the resubmitted work will be used initially to calculate the module aggregate mark. Credit will be awarded where a student achieves an overall module aggregate mark of 50. The penalty mark of zero will then be applied and included in calculations of the mark for the overall weighted average for all the taught modules and the overall weighted average mark, which includes the dissertation.

If the student has initially achieved a mark of 40-49 for the module aggregate (including the raw mark achieved) no credit will be awarded, but the module can be considered for condonement if the average for the taught course modules is 50 after the mark of zero has been included in the calculation.

If the student has initially achieved a mark of less than 40 for the module aggregate then no credit will be awarded and no condonement can be applied.

## **4.2 Re-submission of Dissertations**

- a) Re-submission of dissertations is only permitted in the following circumstances:
- i) Either substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted at the discretion of the Board of Examiners; or
  - ii) Where the original mark awarded is at least 40 and the Board of Examiners judges that the work required does not include any additional experimental or practical work.
- b) Re-submission is subject to the following conditions:
- i) A dissertation must normally be re-submitted within two months of the formal notification of permission to resubmit; in cases of extenuating circumstances, this may be extended to a maximum of twelve months;
  - ii) A dissertation which has been re-submitted because of a marginal fail shall be awarded no more than the minimum pass mark; in the case of re-submissions because of extenuating circumstances, the full range of marks shall be available to examiners.

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## **5 ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES**

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

The Board of Examiners shall have the following powers:

- a) Confirming the taught module marks achieved, including any resit marks presented to the Board, and awarding credit.
- b) Confirming dissertation/project marks.
- c) Confirming any opportunities for second attempts at the assessment for modules, including resubmission of the dissertation.
- d) Considering each student's marks' profile so that they can be advised on the range of possible award outcomes, including whether it is possible for them to make use of dissertation credits.
- e) Considering extenuating circumstances as necessary and their implications for results.
- f) Determining the appropriate award for each student.
- g) Requiring any student whose performance is below that required to achieve an award to withdraw from the University.

**5.1.1** An Interim Board of Examiners Meeting shall normally be held at the end of the taught module assessment or at the end of a stage of study for a part-time course.

**5.1.2** Students will be required to withdraw where the accumulation of further credit would not result in the achievement of any postgraduate award according to the Rules of Assessment.

### **5.2 EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

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

### **5.3 EXAMINATION BOARD DISCRETION**

Except in the case of Extenuating Circumstances (see 5.2 above), the Board of Examiners does not have powers of discretion in relation to the application of the rules of assessment.

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**End**

**SENATE APRIL 2015**

**Appendix A: Validated PG courses and exit awards on University of Essex Online programmes delivered by Kaplan Open Learning**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Maximum Period of Study</b>	<b>Award</b>
<b>Business &amp; Management</b>		
Business and Management	6 Years	MSc
PGDip Business and Management PGCert Business and Management		Exit
PGDip Business and Management	3 Years	PGDip
PGCert Business and Management		Exit
PGCert Business and Management	2 Years	PGCert
MBA	6 years	MBA
PGDip Business Administration: PGCert Business Administration		Exit
MBA - Finance	6 Years	MBA
PGDip Business Administration: PGCert Business Administration		Exit
MBA – Human Resources	6 Years	MBA
PGDip Business Administration PGCert Business Administration		Exit
MBA - Marketing	6 Years	MBA
PGDip Business Administration PGCert Business Administration		Exit
PGDip Business Administration	3 Years	PGDip
PGCert Business Administration		Exit
PGCert Business Administration	2 Years	PGCert
<b>Public Health</b>		
Public Health	6 Years	Masters
PGDip Public Health PGCert Public Health		Exit
PGDip Public Health	3 Years	PGDip
PGCert Public Health		Exit
PG Cert Public Health	2 Years	PGCert
<b>Infection Control</b>		
Infection Control	6 Years	MSc
PGDip Infection Control PGCert Infection Control		Exit
PGDip Infection Control	3 Years	PGDip
PGCert Infection Control		Exit
PGCert Infection Control	2 Years	PGCert

## **NOTES RELATING TO MAXIMUM PERIOD OF STUDY**

- The maximum period of study is set from the date when the student is enrolled onto the first module that contributes towards a University of Essex Online course. Transfers of course are still included in the original maximum period. Unless there are exceptional reasons, periods of intermission will still count towards the original maximum period, with the exception of transfers between courses of different lengths. In these cases the maximum period will be adjusted in line with the maximum periods of study for the new course - increasing for students transferring to a longer programme and reducing for students transferring to a shorter programme.