

**UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX**

**RULES OF ASSESSMENT FOR POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMAS 2015-16**  
(where offered as a stand-alone award)

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**1 PREAMBLE**

- a) These rules apply to the online part-time postgraduate diploma 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 programmes structure and passed, with no condonement of marks below a pass allowed.
- c) It is for the Board of Examiners to determine whether the criteria for an award have been satisfied.
- d) Students will be considered under the Rules of Assessment 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**

- e) 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 the second time. Work submitted during the first period of study cannot be re-submitted when the module is restarted.
- f) 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 components of the postgraduate certificate 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 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 POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE**

##### **Pass**

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

- a) Subject to (d), obtain 120 taught module credits at Masters level.
- b) Pass all the taught core modules.
- c) Pass at least 60 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 modules, will be condoned provided the overall weighted average for the course 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 120 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 80 credits at 60 or above;
- iii) Have no module mark below 50.

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

To obtain a merit a student should:

- i) Obtain 120 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 60 credits at 60 or above;
- 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 120 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 60 credits at 70 or above;
- iii) Have no module mark below 50.

c) **Arithmetic Average**

To obtain a distinction a student should:

- i) Obtain 120 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 60 credits at 70 or above;
- iii) Have an overall weighted average mark of 70 or more;
- iii) 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.

#### 3.2.1 Pass

The pass mark for all Postgraduate Certificate modules is 50.

#### 3.2.2 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 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.
- 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 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.

#### 4.2 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.

- 4.3** 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.
- 4.4** 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.
- 4.5** 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.

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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 from the University.

### **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 rules of assessment.

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**End**