CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX C

University Framework for Full-time and Part-time Modular Postgraduate Programmes

2010-11

Applicable to the 2010-11 cohort only.

In the Code of Practice on Assessment and all Appendices the term “student” includes apprentices on degree apprenticeship programmes
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1. **Introduction**

1.1 This Framework is for full-time and part-time modular, taught postgraduate programmes leading to the award of Master’s Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates.

1.2 Students studying on a programme that comes within this framework will register onto an approved programme leading to an award of a Master’s Degree, or a Postgraduate Diploma, or a Postgraduate Certificate. Students may only be eligible for an award that is different from that for which they were registered if it is to be an exit award or if the student changes their registration.

1.3 In order to be admitted to a module programme of postgraduate study, each candidate must have obtained such prior qualifications and/or experience as shall be determined by or on behalf of the relevant Faculty Management Team. Candidates shall be admitted to a modular programme of postgraduate study only with the approval of the relevant Faculty Management Team.

1.4 All part-time taught postgraduate programmes should fully comply with this framework for all new cohorts commencing in the 2010-11 academic session.

1.5 Within this framework, all programmes of study should be compatible with the following definitions:

   (a) Master’s a vocational or non-vocational programme, involving both a substantial piece or pieces of independent work and a range of assessed modules, whose combined challenge reflects the level of further intellectual development appropriate to the equivalent of one year’s advanced study beyond Honours degree level. A Master’s Degree will provide an appropriate foundation for research degree registration and/or the qualities and transferable skills to enable independent learning required for continuing professional development.

   (b) Postgraduate Diploma – a vocational or non-vocational programme taught and assessed in part at Master’s level but not involving a substantial piece of independent work.

   (c) Postgraduate Certificate – a vocational or non-vocational programme taught and assessed in part at Master’s level but not involving a substantial piece of independent work and covering a narrower range of material.

   (NB “Postgraduate” does not imply all entrants or most entrants are graduates or that their entry qualification is in the same area as the postgraduate programme. It relates to the standard of work required of them at the point of assessment, both in pace and content.)

1.6 The requirements for completion of each programme of study shall be consistent with this framework and shall be approved by the School Scrutiny Panel or University Approval Panel as appropriate and set out in the programme handbook.

1.7 Exemptions from this framework should only be granted where clear and demonstrable academic justification for non-conformity has been presented to and approved by the University Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

2. **Module and Credit Requirements**

2.1 All provision should be modularised; each module must be assessed and given a credit value and an associated level. The form of assessment shall be approved by the School Scrutiny Panel in accordance with the requirements of the programme and module approval processes in place.
2.2 Credit values should be assigned on the basis that 10 hours of student commitment (divided into variable mixes of contact and private study hours) should be allocated 1 credit point.

2.3 Each programme of study shall consist of a number of ‘taught’ modules which shall each have a value of 5 or 7.5 or 10 or 15 or 20 or 30 or 40 or 45 credit points; it should be noted that it is not required for all ‘taught’ modules in a programme to have the same credit value, programmes can consist of modules with different credit values.

2.4 The number of credit points attached to a single module dissertation or project shall normally be 60; or there shall be two modules of independent research totalling 60 credits.

2.5 All provision should comply with the following minimum credit requirements:

(a) A programme of study leading to a Master’s award shall:

(i) require successful completion of at least 180 credits; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to 30 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 30 credits of the Open Languages\(^1\) modules at FHEQ levels 4, 5 or 6;

(ii) include research consisting of a single project or dissertation module normally worth 60 credits or two independent research modules totalling 60 credits;

(iii) include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named/unnamed Postgraduate Diploma upon successfully completing 120 credits; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to 30 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 30 credits of the Open Languages\(^2\) modules at FHEQ levels 4, 5 or 6; the 120 credits may include dissertation, project or independent research credits;

(iv) include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named/unnamed Postgraduate Certificate upon successfully completing 60 credits; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to 15 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 15 credits of the Open Languages\(^3\) modules at FHEQ levels 4, 5 or 6; the 60 credits may not include dissertation, project or independent research credits.

(b) A programme of study leading to a Postgraduate Diploma shall:

(i) require successful completion of at least 120 credits from taught modules; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to 30 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 30 credits of the Open Languages\(^4\) modules at FHEQ levels 4, 5 or 6. A Postgraduate Diploma programme may not include a single 60 credit dissertation or project module among the credit to be achieved; credit achieved on a single 60 credit dissertation or project module, or two independent research modules totalling 60 credits, may only contribute to the award of a Postgraduate Diploma when it is an exit award (see 2.5(a)(ii) above). However, a Postgraduate Diploma may include up to a maximum of 30 credits of independent research;

(ii) include an exit point whereby a student shall be awarded a named/unnamed Postgraduate Certificate upon successfully completing 60 credits; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to

\(^1\) The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/

\(^2\) The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/

\(^3\) The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/

\(^4\) The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/
15 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 15 credits of the Open Languages\textsuperscript{5} modules at FHEQ levels 4, 5 or 6.

(c) A programme of study leading to a Postgraduate Certificate shall require successful completion of at least 60 credits from taught modules; either all at FHEQ level 7, or a combination of FHEQ level 7 and FHEQ level 6 modules of which up to 15 credits are permitted at FHEQ level 6, or up to 15 credits of the Open Languages\textsuperscript{6} modules at FHEQ levels 4, 5 or 6; the 60 credits may include up to 30 credits of independent research.

Points (a), (b) and (c) above state the minimum requirements and thus allow for the accommodation of programmes where, for example, there is a need to undertake preliminary studies for graduates in non-relevant subjects or a need to include substantial clinical work.

2.6 Where a programme includes FHEQ level 6 modules or Open Languages\textsuperscript{7} modules at FHEQ levels 4, 5 or 6 (as detailed above) that are also available to students on undergraduate degrees of the University, graduates of those undergraduate programmes will not be permitted to repeat in a postgraduate programme, a FHEQ level 6 module or Open Languages\textsuperscript{8} modules at FHEQ levels 4, 5 or 6 they have taken in their undergraduate degree. In such instances, the programme must make suitable alternatives available to the student. Similarly, where a student has taken an FHEQ level 7 module as part of an undergraduate degree they have taken at the University they will not be permitted to take the same FHEQ level 7 module(s) as part of a postgraduate programme of the University; the postgraduate programme must provide a suitable alternative for such students.

2.7 Where two modules, one at FHEQ level 6 and the other at FHEQ level 7, share substantially the same learning and teaching provision but have different assessments, it should not be possible for a student to take both modules. If a student of the University takes one such module in their undergraduate degree, if s/he goes on to take a postgraduate programme, s/he will not be permitted to take the FHEQ level 7 module that shares substantially the learning and teaching with the FHEQ level 6 module they have already taken. The postgraduate programme that uses such modules must provide suitable alternatives for students to ensure they do not have to repeat the learning and teaching they had in their undergraduate degree.

3. 

Awards and Programme Titles

3.1 The awards of a Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate may be named or unnamed. A named award carries the name of an approved programme of study that the student successfully completed and will indicate the subject or discipline studies (e.g. Postgraduate Certificate in … [subject area]); an unnamed award simply states the level of qualification achieved.

3.2 The default position is that named awards will be given if either:

(a) the student was registered onto the award and has successfully completed the required modules for the award for the award; or

(b) the student was registered onto a higher award (Postgraduate Diploma or Master’s) and exits with a lower award having successfully completed the required modules for the exit award.

3.3 The awards of Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate will not carry the name of the programme in the following circumstances:

\hspace{1cm}\textsuperscript{5} The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at [https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/)

\hspace{1cm}\textsuperscript{6} The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at [https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/)

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\hspace{1cm}\textsuperscript{8} The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at [https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/)
4. Pass Mark and Classification

4.1 All provision will have clearly defined assessments for each module with a pass mark of 50%. If the programme of study includes FHEQ level 6 modules or Open Languages\(^9\) modules at FHEQ levels 4, 5 or 6 (as detailed in section 2 above) which have a pass mark of 40%, students must achieve 50% or more for the credit to be recognised for a postgraduate award.

4.2 Pass marks and average marks shall be rounded to the nearest whole number. Decimal places less than .5 should be rounded down, decimal places of .5 or above should be rounded up.

4.3 All provision leading to the award of a Master’s, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate shall include the following:

(a) a requirement to achieve a mark of 50% or more in every taught module and in any dissertation, project or independent research modules; except that where the average of the total marks in all taught modules is 50% or above, a mark of 40-49% shall be deemed compensatable in taught modules only totalling up to 20 credits. Compensation shall not be applied where more than 20 taught credits are failed. It should be noted that the range of compensatable marks for FHEQ level 6 modules shall also be 40-49%;

(b) provision for a mark of Merit or Distinction to be awarded according to the criteria below, but only where the requirements are achieved at the first attempt. A Merit or Distinction cannot be awarded if a student has failed and then passed on re-assessment any credit that counts towards the final award during the relevant period of study at the University, however marks achieved in modules which are passed under the compensation rule may be counted toward a Merit or Distinction. It should be noted that students who register on a Master’s or Postgraduate Diploma but who exit with a lower award, will be eligible for a Merit or Distinction for the lower award, provided the student meets the criteria outlined below:

(i) For a Master’s Degree with Merit a student must achieve:
   - a mark of at least 60% for the dissertation, project or independent research modules; and
   - marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
   - an overall average mark of at least 60%.

(ii) For a Postgraduate Diploma with Merit a student must achieve:
   - marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
   - an overall average mark of at least 60%.

(iii) For a Postgraduate Certificate with Merit a student must achieve:
   - marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and

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\(^9\) The Open Languages Framework can be accessed at [https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/](https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/languages/)
• an overall average mark of at least 60%.

(iv) For a Master’s Degree with **Distinction** a student must achieve:
• at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award, including the dissertation, and an overall average mark of at least 65%.

(v) For a Postgraduate Diploma with **Distinction** a student must achieve:
• at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award and an overall average mark of at least 65%.

(vi) For a Postgraduate Certificate with **Distinction** a student must achieve:
• an overall average mark of at least 70%.

5. **Programme Structure**

5.1 The structure for **full-time** programmes shall be as follows:

(a) Master’s – the full-time period of study leading to a Master’s Degree shall be 12 months.

(b) Postgraduate Diploma – the full-time period of study leading to a Postgraduate Diploma shall be 30 weeks.

(c) Postgraduate Certificate – the full-time period of study leading to a Postgraduate Certificate shall be 15 weeks.

(d) For the Master’s Degree and the Postgraduate Diploma the ‘taught’ modules should normally be divided equally between the two semesters, i.e. they should normally take taught modules totalling 60 credits in each semester. However, programmes may be designed with imbalances of up to 15 taught credits between semesters, e.g. 52.5 credits in semester one and 67.5 credits in semester two. Any proposal for a programme to be designed with a greater imbalance of workload (up to 30 taught credits difference between the two semesters) will require specific permission from the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. Such permission will only be given in exceptional circumstances on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory rationale. In exceptional circumstances, individual students may be allowed to choose options in their programme of studies which would result in an imbalance of up to 30 taught credits, e.g. 45 credits in semester one and 75 credits in semester two. Such choices require the specific permission of the Programme Leader/Director of Studies for the programme and a student choosing such a pattern of study must be made aware that the fact of uneven workload will not be regarded as an extenuating factor in the case of failure in assessment.

(e) All provision should be semesterised. Programmes may be designed to begin at the start of any semester and may have intakes annually, at the beginning of every semester or less frequently than annually.

(f) For dissertations, projects or independent research module assessments the deadline for submission shall be 15th September (or next working day if this date falls on a weekend) following the final semester of attendance in respect of taught modules.

(g) Where a student is required to re-sit or re-take failed assessments, the Board of Examiners shall grant an automatic extension for the submission of the dissertation to 15th December next (or the next working day if this date falls on a weekend), if:
   i. the board of Examiners has accepted extenuating circumstances in relation to the failed module(s); or
   ii. the failure relates to modules totalling 30 credits or more, without extenuating circumstances.
5.2 All part-time programmes of study should be structured over a fixed period as detailed below.

(a) Master’s – a programme of study leading to a Master's award should be designed to be completed over a fixed period up to a maximum of 3 years; this is the length of the programme and must be clearly stated in the programme specification. The maximum registration period for a part-time Master’s programme is 6 years and this includes any periods of suspension of studies. This registration period is to allow for students with exceptional circumstances who cannot complete during the approved length of the programme, which cannot exceed 3 years.

(b) Postgraduate Diploma – a programme of study leading to a Postgraduate Diploma award should be designed to be completed over a fixed period up to a maximum of 2 years; this is the length of the programme and must be clearly stated in the programme specification. The maximum registration period for a part-time Postgraduate Diploma programme is 5 years and this includes any periods of suspension of studies. This registration period is to allow for students with exceptional circumstances who cannot complete during the approved length of the programme, which cannot exceed 2 years.

(c) Postgraduate Certificate – a programme of study leading to a Postgraduate Certificate award should be designed to be completed over a fixed period up to a maximum of 1 year; this is the length of the programme and must be clearly stated in the programme specification. The maximum registration period for a part-time Postgraduate Certificate is 3 years and this includes any periods of suspension of studies. This registration period is to allow for students with exceptional circumstances who cannot complete during the approved length of the programme, which cannot exceed 1 year.

(d) Where possible all programmes, whether leading to a Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate, should be semesterised. Programmes may be designed to begin at the start of any semester and may have intakes annually, at the beginning of every semester or less frequently than annually.

(e) Dissertations or projects or independent research module assessments shall be submitted by 15th September (or the next working day if this date falls on a weekend) following the final semester of attendance in respect of taught modules.

(f) Where a student is required to re-sit or re-take failed assessments, the Board of Examiners shall grant an automatic extension for the submission of the dissertation to 15th March next (or the next working day if this date falls on a weekend), if:
   i. the board of Examiners has accepted extenuating circumstances in relation to the failed module(s); or
   ii. the failure relates to modules totalling 30 credits or more, without extenuating circumstances.

5.3 Students who exit with a Postgraduate Diploma or a Postgraduate Certificate, having been registered on a higher award, will achieve the appropriate exit award for credit achieved over the registration period of the programme on which they were registered, as stated in the programme specification.

5.4 All part-time programmes should normally be designed such that the spread of credit is evenly distributed across the years of study.

5.5 Where students select optional modules that will lead to an imbalance in workload, the selection must be approved by the Programme Leader/Director of Studies and the student must be made aware that the fact of the uneven workload will not be regarded as an extenuating factor in the case of failure in assessments.
6. Late registration on modules or programmes

6.1 The decision to accept a student onto a module once teaching has started on it must be based on the academic judgement of the module coordinator/convenor to ensure that the student registering late on the module will not be disadvantaged in respect of opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes, in-session coursework deadlines and learning contexts such as group work. Normally transfer into a module will not be allowed after two weeks from the commencement of teaching. Transfers will also only be allowed if the timetable can accommodate the revised module combination. If such a transfer would result in a credit imbalance across semesters 1 and 2, the approval of the Programme Leader/Director of Studies must be secured as detailed in paragraph 5.5 above and the student must be made aware of the fact that the uneven workload will not be regarded as an extenuating factor in the case of failure in assessments.

6.2 The decision to accept a student onto a programme once teaching has started on it must be based on the academic judgement of the Programme Leader/Director of Studies, in consultation with the relevant module coordinators, to ensure that the student registering late on the programme will not be disadvantaged in respect of opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes, in-session coursework deadlines and learning contexts such as group work. Normally late registration onto a programme will not be allowed after two weeks from the commencement of teaching on the programme.

6.3 A student will be deemed to be “restarting” a module or programme if they have previously registered for the module or programme, withdrawn and then opted to start that module or programme again within the period allowed for late registration as indicated in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2 above. Any work that the student had submitted for assessment during their previous registration on the module or programme would be disregarded and therefore all assessment tasks would be submitted as if for the first time. Students should be aware that resubmission of assessment tasks by a student restarting a module or programme does not guarantee that the same provisional mark will be awarded for the task(s).

7 Re-assessment

7.1 Candidates who are registered onto a programme of study leading to an award and fail one or more modules at the first attempt shall be permitted to present themselves for re-assessment in the failed assessment component(s) for each failed module on one further occasion during the maximum registration period. Re-assessment in ‘taught’ modules should normally take place at the next re-assessment opportunity and within 12 months of the failed assessment. If a student is permitted to replace a discontinued or unavailable module with a new module not previously attempted for a failed module, the mark for the new module shall be capped, except where the mark for the original module was deemed to have been affected by extenuating circumstances. Re-assessment in research and independent study modules will normally take place within 12 months of the publication of results. Whenever an examination/assessment is reassessed, the mark achieved in the re-assessment always supersedes any earlier mark, even when the earlier mark is higher. Marks achieved through re-assessment will be capped at 50% for the purposes of calculating the overall average mark and determining classification for an award; the actual mark achieved through re-assessment will be the mark recorded on the transcript.

7.2 For candidates who are permitted to present themselves for re-assessment in research and independent study modules, the Board of Examiners shall determine whether they should do so either:

(a) As re-taking the module with attendance with full supervision. The Board of Examiners shall ensure that the student is given clear guidance on whether or not the retake should be on a new topic; or
(b) As re-sitting the module without attendance. The Board of Examiners shall ensure that the student is given clear guidance as to the level of supervision which they can expect; it is anticipated that this requires no attendance on campus and no face-to-face meetings with supervisors or no registration on an online module and that the student is not required to make a submission on a new topic. The student shall be provided with formative written feedback on their first attempt submission; or

(c) As re-sitting the module with partial supervision. The Board of Examiners shall ensure that the student is given clear guidance as to the level of supervision which they can expect; it is anticipated that this requires no attendance on campus and no face-to-face meetings with supervisors or no registration on an online module and that the student shall not normally be required to make a submission on a substantially new topic. The Board of Examiners shall ensure that the student is provided with formative written feedback on their first attempt submission and given clear guidance as to the level of supervision which they can expect.

8 Recognised Prior Learning

All programmes of study will permit entry with credit attributed to previous certificated study up to a total of one third of the credits required to be awarded a Master's Degree, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate.
permission from the Academic Quality and Standards Committee. Such permission will only be
given in exceptional circumstances on submission and acceptance of a satisfactory rationale. In
exceptional circumstances, individual students may be allowed to choose options in their
programme of studies which would result in an imbalance of up to 30 taught credits, e.g. 45
credits in semester one and 75 credits in semester two. Such choices require the specific
permission of the Director of Studies for the programme and a student choosing such a pattern
of study must be made aware that the fact of the uneven workload will not be regarded as an
extenuating factor in the case of failure in assessments and consequent failure to progress to the
next year of study.

6. Students who attend for a minimum period of 12 months full-time study, or an approved period
of part-time study, and who achieve the required amount of credit, as specified in the programme
regulations (normally 180 credits), will be eligible for the award of a Master’s Degree. Students
who attend for a minimum period of 30 weeks of full-time study, or for an approved period of part-
time study, and who achieve a minimum of 120 credit points, will be eligible for the award of a
Postgraduate Diploma. Students who attend for a minimum period of 15 weeks of full-time study
or for an approved period of part-time study, and who achieve a minimum of 60 credit points will
be eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate. To qualify for an award, the student shall
obtain all credits within the requirements of an approved programme of study except as provided
for in clause 2 above.

7. Students shall be assessed in each module or combination of modules as shall be determined
by the PGT Regulations and the requirements of the appropriate approved programme, as stated
in the programme specification. Students who fail taught modules may be re-assessed in those
modules on one further occasion only. A failed dissertation or project or independent research
modules may also be re-submitted on one further occasion only. For full-time and part-time
students the dissertation or project or the independent research assessments must be re-
submitted within one year of the original date of first submission.

8. No candidate shall be eligible for an award later than six years following the date of initial
registration. Full time students should normally complete within one year.

9. Students planning to undertake laboratory/field based research for their dissertation, project or
independent research modules who have failed key taught components and as a result are
deemed, by the Board of Examiners, to be at risk to themselves and others, may be prevented
from progressing to the dissertation, project or independent research modules, following
University approval of a recommendation from the Board of Examiners, until the relevant taught
components are re-taken and passed. In these cases the submission date of the dissertation,
project or independent research modules shall be extended to 15th December (or the next
working day if this date falls on a weekend).

10. The Master’s Degree, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate may be awarded with
a mark of Merit or Distinction to candidates as follows. A Merit or Distinction cannot be awarded
if a candidate has failed and then passed by re-assessment any credit that counts towards the
final award during the relevant period of study at the University; however marks achieved in
modules which are passed under the compensation rule may be counted toward a Merit or
Distinction. It should be noted that students who register on a Master’s Degree or Postgraduate
Diploma but who exit with a lower award, will be eligible for a Merit or Distinction for the lower
award, provided the student meets the criteria outlined below:

(i) For a Master’s Degree with Merit a student must achieve:
• a mark of at least 60% for the dissertation or project or independent research modules;
and
• marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall
award; and
• an overall average mark of at least 60%.

(ii) For a Postgraduate Diploma with Merit a student must achieve:
• marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
• an overall average mark of at least 60%.

(iii) For a Postgraduate Certificate with Merit a student must achieve
• marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award; and
• an overall average mark of at least 60%.

(iv) For a Master’s Degree with Distinction a student must achieve:
• at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award, including the dissertation, and an overall average mark of at least 65%.

(v) For a Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction a student must achieve:
• at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the overall award and an overall average mark of at least 65%.

(vi) For a Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction a student must achieve:
• an overall average mark of at least 70%.