



# **CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT**

## **APPENDIX P**

### **University Framework for the Certificate and Diploma in Professional Studies 2025-26**

Applicable only to the following cohorts  
2014-15 to 2025-26

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

## **University Framework for the Certificate/Diploma in Professional Studies**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This framework is for full-time and part-time modular provision leading to one of the following awards:
  - (a) Diploma in Professional Studies
  - (b) Certificate in Professional Studies;
- 1.2 All provision leading to one of the above awards should fully comply with this framework for all students registering on to such programmes of study from the 2014-15 academic session.
- 1.3 Within this framework all programmes of study should be compatible with the following definitions:
  - (a) Diploma in Professional Studies – a vocational programme, post-experience in nature, taught and assessed mainly at final year undergraduate level.
  - (b) Certificate in Professional Studies – a vocational programme, post-experience in nature, taught and assessed mainly at undergraduate level.

### **2. Module and Credit Requirements**

- 2.1 All provision delivered under this framework, leading to a Diploma or Certificate in Professional Studies should be modularised; each module must be assessed and be given a credit value and an associated level.
- 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 2.5 or 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 All provision should comply with the following credit requirements:
  - (a) A programme of study leading to a Diploma in Professional Studies shall require successful completion of 120 credits at FHEQ Levels 5, 6 or 7, with no more than 30 credits at FHEQ Level 7.
  - (b) A programme of study leading to a Certificate in Professional Studies shall require successful completion of 60 credits at FHEQ Levels 5, 6 or 7, with no more than 15 credits at FHEQ Level 7

### **3. Awards Programme Titles and Exit Points**

- 3.1 A Certificate or Diploma in Professional Studies shall be a named award as approved to reflect a programme of study in a designated subject area or discipline e.g. CPS in Health Sciences. A Certificate in Professional Studies may be awarded as an unnamed award when achieved as an exit point, as described in 3.2 below.
- 3.2 A Diploma in Professional Studies programme shall include an exit point, whereby a student shall be awarded a Certificate in Professional Studies upon successfully completing 60 credits, as

detailed in 2.4(b) above. By default, the exit award will bear the same name as the programme for the Diploma award. In appropriate circumstances, a programme of study leading to a Diploma in Professional Studies may be approved to include an exit award at Certificate level that bears a different name from the Diploma. An unnamed Certificate in Professional Studies will be awarded where the Diploma programme only makes provision for an unnamed exit award (and this is clearly stated in the programme specification) or the programme provides for a named or unnamed exit award, depending on the combination of modules passed. In the case of the latter, the programme specification must be very clear about what combination of modules must be passed to get the named exit award; if a student fails to pass these specific modules but achieves sufficient credit for the Certificate, the student shall receive an unnamed award.

- 3.3 A programme of study leading to a Certificate or Diploma in Professional Studies may include modules from outside the named subject area or discipline, up to a maximum credit value of 25% of the total credit for the award.

#### **4. Pass Mark and Classification**

- 4.1 All provision shall have clearly defined assessments for each module with a pass mark of 40% for modules at FHEQ Levels 5 or 6 and a pass mark of 50% for modules at FHEQ Level 7.
- 4.2 All provision leading to the award of a Certificate or Diploma in Professional Studies shall require students to achieve an overall average mark of at least 40% and to pass every module leading to the award of a Certificate or Diploma in Professional Studies.
- 4.3 For students who register onto an award of Certificate or Diploma in Professional Studies, all provision shall provide for compensatable passes such that for students who have an average total mark of at least 40%, a mark within the ranges shown below shall be deemed compensatable in taught modules totalling up to 20 credits:
- (a) in an FHEQ Level 5 or 6 module a mark of 35-39% shall be deemed compensatable;
  - (b) in an FHEQ Level 7 module a mark of 40-49% shall be deemed compensatable.
- 4.4 For students who register onto individual modules within a programme leading to a Certificate or Diploma in Professional Studies, a mark of 40% for FHEQ Level 5 or 6 modules and 50% for FHEQ Level 7 modules must be achieved; there shall be no compensation for any marks below these.
- 4.5 Students will be awarded a Diploma or Certificate in Professional Studies with Merit if they achieve:
- (a) marks of at least 60% in modules accounting for at least half the credit of the overall award;  
and
  - (b) an overall average mark of at least 60%.
- 4.6 Students will be awarded a Diploma or Certificate in Professional Studies with Distinction if they achieve:
- (a) marks of at least 70% in modules accounting for at least half the credit of the overall award;  
and
  - (b) an overall average mark of at least 70%.
- 4.7 All candidates who successfully complete the required credit for a final award at the first or subsequent attempt are eligible to be considered for an award with Merit or Distinction but marks for modules passed at a second or subsequent attempt will be capped at the pass mark. It should

be noted that marks achieved in modules that are passed under the compensation rule (see 4.3 above) may still count towards a Merit or a Distinction mark.

- 4.8 A Merit or Distinction mark will still be available to students who are receiving a Certificate in Professional Studies as an exit award, having been registered on the Diploma in Professional Studies, provided the requirements of 4.5 or 4.6 above have been met.

## **5. Classification Calculations for Students with Personal Extenuating Circumstances**

- 5.1 Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PECs) are circumstances beyond a student's control that may affect their ability to submit coursework on time, attend a timed assessment, or that may adversely impact their academic performance, as set out in Appendix M to the Code of Practice on Assessment: Additional Considerations Policy for Taught Students.

- 5.2 This section 5 should be read in conjunction with Appendix M and applies to modules that have been passed but have been affected by accepted PECs. It does not apply to modules affected by PECs that have been failed, these are covered in Appendix M.

- 5.3 Students with PECs that have been accepted are required to pass all mandatory modules and to obtain an overall average at or above the pass mark set out in section 4 above. The overall average mark will be calculated including and excluding module marks at or above the pass mark affected by PECs. The maximum number of credits that can be excluded from the calculation shall be no more than 25% of the overall award. The discounting of credit should take place at module level, i.e. where a 50% component of a 15-credit module has been deemed affected by PECs, the entire module mark totalling 15 credits shall be excluded, rather than 7.5 credits. The maximum credit that can be discounted for each award is as follows:

- Diploma in Professional Studies: modules totalling 30 credits from the 120 credits required for the award;
- Certificate in Professional Studies: modules totalling 15 credits from the 60 credits required for the award.

- 5.4 Where there are accepted PECs for modules that have been passed, the following calculations shall be undertaken to determine the overall average mark and the classification:

### **Diploma in Professional Studies**

- (a) Calculate the overall average from marks from all modules, whether or not they were affected by PECs.
- (b) Exclude the lowest marks from modules affected by PECs up to a maximum of 30 credits, and calculate the overall average from the marks for the remaining credits.
- (c) Using the higher of the two marks calculated in (a) and (b) above, the classification grade should be determined using the criteria below:
  - marks of at least 60% achieved in modules accounting for at least half of the credit of the award is required for a **merit** grade, or at least 70% for a **distinction**. To determine if this is met, discount the same credit as was discounted under 5.4(b) above after which marks of at least 60% for a **merit** or at least 70% for a **distinction** must be achieved in modules accounting for at least half of the remaining credit; and
  - an overall average of at least 60% is required for a **merit** grade, or at least 70% for a **distinction**.

### **Certificate in Professional Studies**

The same calculation rules as set out above for the Diploma in Professional Studies apply to the Certificate in Professional Studies except the maximum credit that can be discounted is 15 credits.

5.5 This represents the full mitigation available for modules that have been passed but were affected by PECs i.e. credit, up to the maximum stipulated above, can be mitigated by discounting it as explained above. There is no further mitigation for any passed module affected by PECs where the mark for such module(s) could not be discounted because the total value exceeded the value that could be discounted.

## **6. Programme Structure**

6.1 Programmes leading to a Diploma or Certificate in Professional Studies shall normally be part-time and shall normally have the following maximum periods of registration:

- (a) A Diploma in Professional Studies must be completed no later than 4 years following the date of initial registration. A Diploma in Professional Studies that is full-time must be completed 2 years following the date of initial registration.
- (b) A Certificate in Professional Studies must be completed no later than 3 years following the date of initial registration. A Certificate in Professional Studies that is full-time must be completed 18 months following the date of initial registration.
- (c) Individual part-time programmes may be designed to be completed over a period that is shorter than the maximum registration period permitted within this Framework; programme structures must be clearly shown in individual programme specifications, whether they conform to the maximum registration period or are structured over a shorter period.

## **7. Re-assessment**

7.1 Students who fail in one or more modules at the first attempt shall be permitted to present themselves for re-assessment in the failed module(s) on one more occasion during the registration period of the programme. Marks achieved in re-assessment shall be capped at the pass mark and shall be flagged in the transcript to indicate that they were achieved at a second or subsequent attempt.

## **8. Accredited or Recognised Prior Learning**

8.1 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 Certificate or a Diploma in Professional Studies.

## **9. Admissions**

9.1 Students admitted to a programme leading to a Certificate or Diploma in Professional Studies shall meet the entry criteria as stipulated in the relevant programme specification.