

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE RULES OF ASSESSMENT (4-YEAR FULL-TIME ACCREDITED)

APPLICABLE TO STUDENTS FIRST STARTING IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/26

1. PREAMBLE

1.1 These rules apply to four-year full-time accredited Professional Doctorate programmes. The rules should be read in conjunction with the:

- [Variations to the Rules of Assessment document](#)
- [Professional Doctorate Course Credit Framework](#)
- [Programme Structure](#) - this identifies which modules are core for the Programme.
- [Programme Milestones](#) - these include the progression requirements for the research components
- Online [Module Directory](#) entries (or equivalent for Partner Institutions) - these give details of assessment arrangements and formats
- [Principal Regulations for Research Degrees](#) and [Codes of practice relating to higher degrees](#) - these outline the requirements for postgraduate research degrees

1.2 A taught module is any assessed component excluding the thesis. A core module must be taken as part of the programme structure and passed, with no condonement of marks below pass allowed.

1.3 Taught components will be considered by a Board of Examiners. Research components, contributing to the research thesis, will be considered by both a Supervisory Panel and a Research Students' Progress Board (RSPB), who will make a recommendation about whether a student can progress. The final submitted research thesis will be examined at a viva voce/oral examination and the award will only be conferred once all of the taught and research requirements have been met, as outlined in the [Principal Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

1.4 See Appendix 1 of this document for additional information relating to the Professional

Doctorate in Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (M80).

2. PASS MARK

2.1 The pass mark for the numerically graded taught modules is 50.

2.2 For the purposes of these rules, where there are taught module averages, the mark will be rounded to the nearest whole number – i.e. 49.5 will count as 50, 49.4 as 49.

2.3 Where a module requires specific components (or all components) to be passed, then a module mark of 50 will not necessarily signify that the module has been passed, and it must be confirmed that every individual component has met any necessary minimum mark. Please review relevant variation to rules of assessment document for more information.

2.4 Non-numerically graded taught modules will be graded as Pass or Fail.

2.5 The thesis is not graded numerically.

3. PROGRESSION

3.1 To pass the first, second or third year and proceed to Year Two, Three or Four, or to pass Year Four (Final Year), a student must:

- a) Pass all taught modules. If the first opportunity for reassessment falls within the next year of study, the student may be permitted to proceed and undertake reassessment in up to a maximum of 50% of the credits for that year at the first available opportunity (see 5.2.b).
- b) Pass the assessment of professional components/competencies if they are a part of the programme.
- c) Where appropriate, have met all research progression requirements for that year.
- d) Where appropriate, have met any variation to the Rules of Assessment for the programme.

4. ELIGIBILITY FOR AN AWARD

To be awarded the Professional Doctorate a candidate must:

- a) Pass all taught modules.
- b) Pass the assessment of professional components/competencies if they are a part of the programme.
- c) Pass the research thesis.

5. REASSESSMENT

5.1 Reassessment for taught modules: general principles

5.1.1 Students who have failed any taught module will have one opportunity to undertake reassessment in that module.

5.1.2 No second attempt at the assessment for a module is permitted prior to the Board of Examiners meeting, where marks are confirmed.

5.1.3 Reassessment only (which does not involve repeating the module with attendance) can only be considered where the Board of Examiners judges that the work required to achieve a pass does not include any additional experimental or practical work. The maximum mark that will be recorded for a module as a result of a second attempt at the reassessment only is 50, unless there are substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners.

5.1.4 Where the Board of Examiners permits a student to have a second attempt at the assessment or a module, (which does not involve repeating the module with attendance), this only applies to any individual assignment/examination for the module that has been failed.

5.1.5 Where a student repeats the module with attendance as their second attempt, the mark will be uncapped.

5.1.6 Where a student has a reassessment opportunity and is repeating the whole year or some modules from that year, with attendance, they can enrol onto a different module if there are options within that component.

5.1.7 The Board of Examiners will reinstate the module mark for the previous attempt at a failed module if it is higher than the mark for the most recent attempt.

5.1.8 A student cannot repeat a module that has been passed to improve their marks unless permitted by the Board of Examiners because of substantiated extenuating circumstances or where they are repeating the entire year.

5.2 Reassessment for taught modules: available options for the Board of Examiners to consider

a) Undertake reassessment at the first available opportunity (normally during the summer vacation) for capped module marks, subject to 5.1.3.

b) Proceed to the next year, subject to passing the reassessment at the first available opportunity, for capped module marks, subject to 5.1.3.

c) Where the Board of Examiners judges that the work required to achieve a pass includes additional experimental or practical work, the student must repeat the failed module(s), with attendance, for uncapped module marks. The student would not be permitted to progress to the next year of study until the module has been passed.

d) Undertake reassessment in the following year without attendance for capped module marks. This would require intermitting, returning to undertake the reassessment and, if successful, resuming the programme from the next available entry point, subject to 5.1.3. The student would not be permitted to progress to the next year of study until the module has been passed.

e) Repeat the entire year, with attendance, for uncapped module marks.

5.3 Reassessment for research component

The standard postgraduate research examination outcomes for the research thesis, as appropriate for Professional Doctorates, apply, as stated in the [Principal Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

6. DISCONTINUATION/WITHDRAWAL

6.1 Where a student fails a taught module having exhausted all available assessment attempts, the student will be discontinued/withdrawn by the Board of Examiners on academic grounds.

6.2 Where a student is not meeting the research progression requirements, as outlined in the relevant [Programme Milestones](#), the RSPB may make a recommendation to discontinue their studies, as stated in the [Principal Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

7. EXIT AWARDS

7.1 Research Exit Awards

If a student has passed all of the taught components and submits a thesis for examination; however, the examiners deem that the thesis has not met the requirements for the Professional Doctorate, then the lower award of Masters by Dissertation (MAD/MSD) can be considered. The eligibility criteria for the award of the degree of Masters by Dissertation are included in the [Principal Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

7.2 Taught Exit Awards

Where a student is unable to complete their studies, e.g. if they do not achieve the required credits to be awarded a Professional Doctorate or they withdraw from their studies, then the following non-accredited exit awards will be considered:

a) Masters in Professional Studies.

This will only be considered where a department has an approved Masters in Professional Studies award. Students must pass at least 300 taught credits to be considered for this non-accredited exit award.

b) Postgraduate Diploma

c) Postgraduate Certificate

The eligibility criteria for a Postgraduate Diploma and a Postgraduate Certificate are included in the Rules of assessment for other postgraduate taught awards.

Departments will identify, on the published programme structures, which taught modules have to be passed in order to obtain a Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or Masters in Professional Studies.

8. ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESSION PROCEDURES

8.1 Board of Examiners

Assessment for the taught modules will be considered by a Board of Examiners.

The Board of Examiners shall have the following powers:

- a) Confirming the taught module marks achieved, including any marks for reassessment presented to the Board, and awarding credit.
- b) Confirming any opportunities for reassessment for taught modules.
- c) Considering extenuating circumstances as necessary and their implications for results.
- d) Determining whether a student is eligible to progress to the next year, based on the taught components.
- e) Requiring any student whose performance is below that required to achieve an award to withdraw from the University.
- f) Determining the appropriate exit award, if applicable, for any student who is required to withdraw from the University.

8.2 Supervisory Panel

Assessment for progress in the research thesis will be considered by a Supervisory Panel which will recommend to the RSPB whether the student can progress to the next year of study, as outlined in the [Codes of practice relating to higher degrees](#) and the [Milestones](#).

8.3 Research Students' Progress Board

The outcome of the Board of Examiners and the Supervisory Panel is reported to the Research Students' Progress Board (RSPB).

8.3.1 Where a student has passed the taught modules or has been permitted further assessment opportunities, the RSPB approves successful progression to the next year of study, or makes a recommendation for final approval by the Dean; this will depend on whether the student has met all research progression requirements for that year.

The RSPB can approve progression, subject to a student meeting the progression requirements of the Board of Examiners, if the RSPB is taking place in advance of the Board of Examiners' decision being available.

8.3.2 Where a student has been discontinued/withdrawn by the Board of Examiners on academic grounds, the decision will be reported to the RSPB for information only.

8.4 Oral examination/Viva Voce Examination (Viva)

The research thesis is assessed in accordance with the normal arrangements for research degrees, as outlined in the [Principal Regulations for Research Degrees](#) and [Codes of practice relating to higher degrees](#).

Approved Variations to the University of Essex Rules of Assessment for 4-Year Full-Time Accredited Professional Doctorates

These rules should be read in conjunction with the relevant Rules of Assessment which apply to your course.

CONTENTS

TV: TAVISTOCK AND PORTMAN NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

TV 1.0 In relation to Professional Doctorate in Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy (M80):

TV 1.1 REASSESSMENT

Where the unit of assessment has been failed, reassessment will normally be offered immediately after marks have been released. In-year reassessment can be offered by the Trust and does not have to be ratified by a Board of Examiners.

TV 1.2 ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESSION PROCEDURES

Board of Examiners

Where the unit of assessment has been failed, reassessment will normally be offered immediately after marks have been released. In-year reassessment can be offered by the Trust and does not have to be ratified by a Board of Examiners.

TV 1.3 OBSERVATIONS/PLACEMENTS/CLINICAL WORK

TV 1.3.1 If a student has been unable to achieve the stipulated number of hours of observation, placement or clinical work required in order to complete assessment due to circumstances beyond their control then the Board of Examiners will permit one of the following options:

TV 1.3.1.1 If a student will be able to complete the required hours of observation,

placement or clinical work and therefore submit the assessment by the end of the first Term of the following academic year, the Board of Examiners will permit the student to defer their first assessment attempt until the end of the Autumn Term. If the module is core, the student may be permitted to proceed to their next year of study. If the module is core, as detailed in TV1.3.2.1, the student subsequently fails the assessment at the end of the Autumn Term, they will not be permitted to continue with their next year of study.

TV 1.3.1.2 If a student is unable to complete the required hours of observation, placement or clinical work and submit the assessment by the end of the first term of the following academic year, due to circumstances beyond their control, the Board of Examiners will require the student to repeat the module during the following academic year for an uncapped module aggregate. If the module is core, the student will not be permitted to proceed to their next year of study.

TV 1.3.2 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.

TV 1.3.3 If a student is required to repeat the module as outlined in TV1.3.1.2 and subsequently passes the module, the student will be permitted to continue with their studies at the start of the following academic year.

TV 1.3.4 If a student fails the observation, placement or clinical work module on the second attempt, no further attempt is allowed unless there are substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners.

TV1.3.5 If a student has not completed the required number of clinical hours after the period of ten weeks (end of the first term) then the student will be withdrawn from the programme unless there are substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners.

TV 1.4 EXIT AWARDS

In addition to the taught exit awards listed in the Professional Doctorate Rules of

Assessment (4-year Full-time Accredited), students can also be considered for a Postgraduate Taught Masters Award.

End of document

Senate, June 2020; updated January 2025 and January 2026

Document Review Information	
Document owner	Postgraduate Research Education Team
Document author	Kimberley Wright
Document last reviewed by	Kimberley Wright
Date last reviewed	January 2026
Review frequency	Annually