

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

UNDERGRADUATE RULES OF ASSESSMENT

GLOSSARY OF TERMS (2021-22 version)

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Aegrotat degrees

If you are in your Final Year and are unable to complete your studies due to serious ill health or other significant cause, the Board of Examiners can, in certain circumstances, make a judgment on whether you were likely to have completed your studies successfully. If they believe you would have been able to complete your studies an Aegrotat degree may be conferred upon you. The name comes from the Latin for 'he/she/it is ill'. Candidates awarded an Aegrotat degree can undertake assessment at the next opportunity to obtain an honours degree subject to some conditions.

Attempts

The term 'attempt' is used in the following ways in the Rules of Assessment:

- (a) **An attempt at the credits;** you must be enrolled for the required number of credits for the Year and/or award. For example 'To achieve a degree, you must attempt 360 credits'.
- (b) **An attempt at assessment;** you have up to three attempts at a module. The opportunity to take an assessment will count as an attempt, even if you do not submit any work or attend the examination. For example 'The Board of Examiners can permit up to two further attempts at any module'.
- (c) **An attempt at reassessment;** you must take the resit exam/resubmit the coursework. For example 'Following reassessment, if you have failed up to 30 non-core credits, but have attempted the reassessment'.

Award

A qualification (degree, diploma or certificate) conferred upon you for having achieved the learning outcomes and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for the award. The University offers a number of different undergraduate awards that each have their own Rules of Assessment.

Board of Examiners

The formal body that considers your marks, also referred to as 'a/the Board'. The Board approves your marks, decides whether or not you can proceed to the next Year, and confirms your degree classification at the end of your Final Year, in line with the Rules of Assessment. The Board also decides upon any actions taken as a result of extenuating circumstances. A Board of Examiners comprises a small number of selected academic staff from the relevant department(s) for the courses under consideration, external examiners as necessary, and is normally chaired by a Deputy Dean. Boards that consider reassessment grades do not have external examiners in attendance. The Board considers all candidates anonymously, using only an examination number as identification.

Capped Mark

When reassessment is offered for a capped module mark, this means that the maximum mark that will be recorded for the module aggregate is 40. The actual mark achieved will be used to determine whether the assessment has been passed and will still appear on your transcript.

Capping marks in the First Year for progression to the Year Abroad: If you are on a Four-Year Degree with a Year Abroad, you must obtain a Year mark of 50 or above to proceed. If you do not obtain a mark of 50 you may be offered reassessment to raise your Year mark. The uncapped marks achieved will be considered to determine whether the Year Mark of 50 has been achieved before capping is applied.

If you passed all your modules at the first attempt, but did not obtain a Year mark of 50, you will be offered reassessment in modules where you achieved a module mark of less than 50, in up to 60 credits. Your final HEAR (see under HEAR) will not show any higher module marks or Year mark than those you've already achieved, as you are being allowed to do reassessment so that you can progress. The marks achieved by reassessment will be used to calculate whether or not you have achieved the required Year mark.

If you failed one or more modules and also did not obtain a Year mark of 50, you will be offered reassessment in all modules with a mark below 40 along with reassessment where you achieved a module mark of less than 50, in up to 60 credits. Where you are doing reassessment because you have failed a module, your module aggregate will be capped at 40, but the actual mark will be used by the Board of Examiners to determine whether you have obtained a Year mark of 50 or above. There

will be no change to the marks for any modules that you passed at the first attempt, but the actual mark will be used to calculate the Year mark. The Year mark on your HEAR will only change as a result of the capped module aggregate for any modules that were reassessed due to failure.

Classification of awards

Upon completion of a programme of study, an award will normally be given a classification indicating the level of achievement which that you have demonstrated overall. This may be indicated by a numeric classification (e.g. 2.1, 2.2) or by terms such as 'pass', 'merit' or 'distinction'. The Rules of Assessment for each award set out the criteria for achieving each classification. Some awards are unclassified.

Cohort

The term used to describe a group of students who enter the same year of a course in a given academic year. Unless you interrupt your studies by intermission, repeating a year or resitting without attendance, your cohort is the academic year in which you started. However, if you interrupt your studies you will be assessed by the Rules of Assessment which apply to the new cohort you join. For example, if you entered Year One of a course in 2017-18 but you have to repeat Year One in 2018-19 on a full-time basis, you will be assessed by the Rules of Assessment which apply to the cohort which entered Year One in 2018-19.

When the University approves changes to the Rules of Assessment they may be approved for implementation for all students immediately or it may be specified that they are only to take effect from a particular cohort of students.

Compulsory Module

This is a module that you must take for that year of your course. You must enrol for and attempt all the assessments of a Compulsory Module. If you do not pass this module you may be eligible to have a failure condoned, following reassessment, if you have the required number of credits to proceed to your next Year of study. See also 'Core module' and 'Optional module'.

Compulsory Reassessment

At the end of Year One and Year Two (and Year Three of a Four-Year Degree where all four Years are spent at Essex), if you fail up to 60 credits you will be offered compulsory reassessment before the start of the next Year. Your module mark(s) will be capped at 40.

In the Final Year you will be offered compulsory reassessment in the minimum number of credits you need to obtain your degree, up to a maximum of 60 credits, before the new academic year begins. Where appropriate, a combination of compulsory and voluntary reassessment will be offered up to a total of 60 credits. Your module mark(s) will be capped at 40. If you fail this reassessment and you cannot complete your degree, you can then be offered further reassessment for more than 60 credits.

You must make an attempt at the reassessment in all modules for which you are given compulsory reassessment.

Condonement

If you have not passed a non-core module(s), following reassessment, you may still proceed to the next Year but the credits will not be awarded and you cannot attempt the credits in the next Year. You will be 'carrying the fail'. The amount of credit which may be condoned is specified for each award. The Rules of Assessment require that you attempt all the credits for each Year. You can only have credits condoned after reassessment has been attempted. Where credits are condoned, the module mark will still be used to calculate the year mark and the degree mark.

Continuing Professional Development

See under '[Modular study](#)'

Core Module

A core module is a module that you must take and pass in order to progress to the next Year of study. This applies even in cases of extenuating circumstances. Failure in a core module cannot be condoned. Your programme specification outlines which modules are core for your programme. If a module is said to be 'Core with Options' for your programme of study, then if you choose to take it you must pass it before proceeding to the next Year of study.

If you have not taken a core module for a degree to which you wish to transfer, it may, in limited circumstances, be possible for you to undertake the assessments for that course prior to the next year of study and to allow you to transfer subject to your passing.

Course

See under '[Programme of Study](#)'

Credit

Credit is awarded in recognition of learning achieved at the level of the module. The number of credits is based on the volume of study or size/length of the module. If you gain at least a pass mark in your learning assessments you will be awarded the credit (some modules or courses have additional requirements in variations). A credit rating is attached to each module. These accumulate to allow awards (which are evidence of both volume and level of study) to be made. Credits are transportable and can be transferred between institutions, according to their rules of assessment.

To pass the Year and progress to the next Year you must pass the required number of credits. There can be core zero-credit modules.

Deferring assessment and reassessment

If you experience severe circumstances that mean you cannot complete an assignment or attend an exam, you can apply in advance to have this assessment deferred, meaning that you will complete the exam/coursework at the next available opportunity. Deferral of assessment is approved only in exceptional cases as most cases can be dealt with through the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

This process involves your department submitting a case for deferral on your behalf which must be done before the assessment is due to be completed. Your request must be agreed by two Deputy Deans (Education) before any assessment can be deferred.

If you are on a Four-Year programme, including a Year Abroad or Placement Year, and you must complete reassessment in up to 30 non-core credits at the end of Year Two, you may defer this reassessment until you return from your Year Abroad or Placement Year. Further information on this can be found in the Four-Year Honours Degrees Rules of Assessment.

Degree classification

See under '[Classification of awards](#)'

Degree mark

To achieve an Honours degree, you must attempt 360 credits and pass at least 330 credits across your degree with at least 90 credits at level 6. All core modules must be passed. Your marks from Year Two and the Final Year are used to calculate an overall degree mark. Each is given a percentage weighting (see under 'Weighting'). For a Three-Year Degree and for a Four-Year Degree where Year Three is a Placement Year, your Year Two mark counts as 40% and your Final Year mark counts as 60%. The degree mark is used to determine your degree class.

If you are eligible for an Honours degree and your degree mark is within two marks of the next classification you will receive the higher class if you have at least 120 of your credits across Year Two and the Final Year in the higher class.

Some courses have a variation to the standard degree weighting. Full details of these can be found in the [variations to the Rules of Assessment](#).

Module marks, Year marks and your degree mark are rounded to the nearest whole number (see under 'Rounding').

The following examples illustrate how the Degree mark is calculated and applied:

Example 1

Year Two mark is 68 and Final Year mark is 75

Degree mark is $(68 \times 0.4) + (75 \times 0.6) = 27.2 + 45 = 72.2$ rounded to 72

Degree classification is 1st

Example 2

Year Two mark is 74 and Final Year mark is 66

Degree mark is $(74 \times 0.4) + (66 \times 0.6) = 29.6 + 39.6 = 69.2$ rounded to 69

Degree classification is either:

(a) 1st if you have 120 credits (from Year Two and Final Year) at 70 or above; or

(b) 2.1 if you do not.

Example 3

Year Two mark is 52 and Final Year mark is 60

Degree mark is $(52 \times 0.4) + (60 \times 0.6) = 20.8 + 36 = 56.8$ rounded to 57

Degree classification is 2.2

Exam Boards

See under '[Board of Examiners](#)'

Exit Awards

If you cannot complete your studies or you are withdrawn from the University for any reason, the Board of Examiners will consider you for an Exit Award (such as the Certificate of Higher Education and the Diploma of Higher Education) based on the credits you have achieved.

In some cases, where an award leads to professional recognition/registration, a non-accredited award may be made where you do not meet the professional requirements but you have sufficient credits for an academic award (see the published [Variations](#) for these courses).

Extenuating circumstances

The University has an [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#). Extenuating circumstances are circumstances beyond your control which have an impact on your assessed work. They may cause you to perform less well in an assessment, or prevent you from taking an assessment or submitting work. You should submit an Extenuating Circumstances claim by the published deadline. If your claim is accepted as valid, the Board of Examiners will consider what if any action to take in line with the Policy.

First Sit

The Board of Examiners can offer you the opportunity to be reassessed for uncapped marks during the next assessment period if you have accepted extenuating circumstances. This will not be counted against the number of attempts. This may be a voluntary or compulsory reassessment.

Foundation Year

If you do not meet the entry requirements for your chosen undergraduate course of study (starting at Year One) or you have been out of education for a period of time, you may be offered, or you may be able to choose, to take a Foundation Year prior to beginning your undergraduate degree. You must pass this Year to be able to progress to the full undergraduate degree. A Foundation Year will not count towards your degree classification.

Framework

The [University of Essex Principles and Framework](#) sets out the undergraduate awards offered by the University including credit requirements, and the standard and maximum periods of study. Variations may apply to your course which could result in different requirements in order to progress and be awarded your degree. See under '[Variations](#)'.

Full-time study

Programmes of study are designated as full time or part time. Full-time study for an undergraduate degree will normally require you to attempt 120 credits over the course of any one academic Year.

Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)

Your HEAR is the complete record of your time at Essex including your academic achievements. It is the official record of your module marks and credit obtained, and degree outcome.

Intermission

This is when you decide to take a break from your studies for a fixed period of time with the intention of returning. It is usually granted for situations outside of your control, typically for reasons of illness or personal circumstances. Intermission requests must be approved by the University and are subject to deadlines.

Learning Agreement

The Learning Agreement is a contract which officially maps which modules you will study abroad and is an agreement between you, your department at Essex and the host university. Each university will have a different requirement of host credits to be taken which is detailed on the Learning Agreement. You must take the credit load specified by the host university and you must obtain approval for any changes during the year abroad.

Learning Outcomes

These identify what you are expected to know and understand, together with the skills that you should be able to demonstrate on successful completion of a module and/or award. Learning outcomes can be attached to both modules and awards. It is the achievement of the learning outcomes that is important for the award of credit.

Level

Levels of study (as defined in [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies](#)) are an expression of the intellectual demand placed on you in different Years of study, or the difficulty of the concepts to be engaged with and skills required in each Year. Levels are guides that help to identify the relative demand, complexity and depth of learning and learner autonomy expected at each level. They also indicate the differences between the levels. In general terms, Level 3 equates to the University of Essex Foundation Year, Level 4 equates to Year One, Level 5 equates to Year Two, and Level 6 equates to the Final Year.

Maximum Period of Study

The maximum period of study is set from the date when you were first registered on an undergraduate programme. This is the longest period of time you can take to complete the award. It is based on the normal length of the course plus one or more additional years. A Board of Examiners can offer a repeat period of study only if this would not cause you to exceed your maximum period of study. If you are a Tier 4 student you should also be aware of additional rules which apply to you related to maximum periods; more information can be found on the [University's Immigration webpages](#).

Modular study

Modular study is the study of individual modules over a period of time. The credits obtained can be used towards a University of Essex award.

Modules

A module is a unit of study complete in itself, with a set of learning outcomes and credits attached to it. Usually, several modules are combined to lead to an award. A module may be given one of the designations: 'core', 'compulsory' or 'optional' in a given award, although there are some variations. The modules in each Year of undergraduate study will normally combine to give 120 credits; this could typically be from four to eight modules.

Optional module

Where a particular Year of a course has one or more optional modules, this means that you will be able to choose the module(s) that you want to study from a list of options. If you do not pass such a module you may be eligible to have a failure condoned, following reassessment, if you have the required number of credits to proceed to your next Year of study. You may be able to take a different option in a repeat Year (full time or part time).

Outside Option

This is an optional module taken as part of a programme of study which is not run by your main department or by any of the departments where you are on a joint programme. There are restrictions on offering such modules and they are not always available. The module may be among several optional modules which can be taken as part of the award. These modules are treated in the same way as optional modules under the Rules of Assessment.

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Part-time study

Programmes of study are designated as full time or part time. If you are enrolled on a programme you may be given the opportunity by the Board of Examiners to complete reassessment by studying modules again on a part-time basis. In the Rules of Assessment this is referred to as repeating the Year of study part-time (see 'Repeat Year' below). If you are an international student you are advised to contact the University's Immigration Team via their [online enquiry form](#) for more information on whether you are eligible for part-time study.

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Placement

The University offers a range of work-based learning/placement arrangements where you can study for a period of time outside the University if you are on a Four-Year Degree. Learning opportunities are provided by an outside placement provider, working in conjunction with the University.

For some programmes placement study is an integral part of the programme and passing the placement can be a requirement of an external professional body for you to get your degree. For many other programmes, you can take a placement year as an additional year of study, normally between the Second and Final Year.

Prerequisite

A module that must be passed in order to take the course or a specific module in a subsequent year. For example, passing Introduction to Economics would be a prerequisite for taking Intermediary Economics in the following year.

Programme of study

The combinations of modules that have a credit weighting that lead to the overall award being conferred upon you. This can be made up of a combination of core, compulsory and optional modules. This can also be referred to as your course.

Programme Specification

This is a document that defines the learning outcomes and structure (see under 'Structure') associated with a course. This sets out the years and modules that make up the course.

Programme structure

See under '[Programme of Study](#)'

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB)

These are external bodies that set the standards required to work in certain roles/professions for example in nursing and in the law. Where a course has been designed to allow you to go into practice upon successful completion, additional standards/requirements may need to be met as part of the Rules of Assessment in line with the relevant PSRB's requirements. Information on whether your course is subject to PSRB's can be found in documents such as your Course Handbook or Programme Specification. These additional requirements are set out in the [Variations](#).

Ratified

The Board of Examiners ratify all your marks, normally at the end of each Year. These are the confirmed marks that you have achieved in that Year of study after any extenuating circumstances and scaling have been considered. Boards also meet following reassessment. It is the ratified marks that allow for course progression and ultimately count towards your overall degree classification. Ratified marks are the results that appear on your [HEAR](#).

Reinstating the Mark for the Previous Attempt

If you have attempted the reassessment of a module in the resit period or without attending the University, and your module mark is lower than your previous attempt, the Board of Examiners will

use the previous higher mark to determine whether or not you can progress. However, if you repeat the Year (either full time or part time), the marks you achieve during your repeat Year will be the marks that are used by the Board of Examiners to determine whether or not you can progress. They will not take account of marks from a previous year or attempt, even if they are higher.

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Repeat Year

If you do not pass the Year, the Board of Examiners may offer you the opportunity to repeat the Year, either full time or part time, before progression to the next Year is allowed. If you repeat study part time you will carry forward marks from previously passed modules and repeat failed modules only.

You should be aware that the module you failed may not be taught in the following Year. In these circumstances you will need to discuss with your department choosing an alternative module(s).

The marks obtained during a repeat year, whether full time or part time will be uncapped and will stand even if they are lower than in the previous year. These results will also appear on your HEAR.

When you repeat the year you will be expected to attend all teaching and submit new work for assessment. You will be able to choose different optional modules if you wish.

Reassessment without attendance

A Board of Examiners may offer resits in exams or resubmission of coursework without attendance as an alternative to a repeat year. This means intermitting and only taking the reassessment during the next reassessment period, usually May-June, for capped marks. You will be unable to progress onto the next Year of study until this is done. Some modules are not available for reassessment without attendance, (those which require laboratory work for example). In these circumstances you will be offered the option to repeat the Year either full time or take the module part time instead. If you choose to repeat part time you may still be able to take other modules without attendance.

If you are a Tier 4 student you should seek further information on the [University's Immigration webpages](#).

Rounding

Module aggregate marks, Year marks and Degree marks are rounded to the nearest whole number with half marks (i.e. .5) or more being rounded up, so 49.5 will count as 50 whereas 49.4 will count as 49 (see under Degree Mark).

Rules of Assessment

The Rules of Assessment (the 'Rules') describe what you have to do to progress through your course of study; what you have to do to pass each year; what happens if you don't pass; and the criteria for achieving the final award.

The Rules are specific to each cohort so you need to find the Rules that apply to you if you want to check how the decision on your results was made or to find out what you need to do to pass the Year.

Scaling

Marks may be adjusted for all candidates for a unit of assessment based on the Board of Examiners' retrospective judgement concerning the difficulty or accuracy of the task set in accordance with the Scaling policy.

Special syllabus

You can, in some circumstances, make a request to study a syllabus which is not the standard structure for your course. Such a request would be to replace a compulsory (but not a core) module with an alternative module, or to take an option not normally allowed for your degree. An online form must be completed to request a special syllabus, which will require Dean's approval. You should discuss any request with your department first.

Structure

The course structure is a list of the modules taken in each Year of the degree, together with their designation as Core, Compulsory or Optional and their credit weightings. There may also be some additional information.

Term Abroad

Some courses at the University offer the opportunity for you to undertake a term of study at another institution outside of the UK, usually in the Autumn Term of your third year. You must contact your department to discuss this option as it may not be available on all programmes. It is not available if you are a student of Life Sciences, Economics, Essex Business School, Government or the School of Law. If your Final Year includes a compulsory full-year module, Capstone project, or if you has a modern languages component, you can only study abroad for a full year. For information on how your results from a term abroad are counted towards your overall degree please contact Essex Abroad.

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Transcript

This is a record of the modules you have studied and the marks obtained. It is provided as part of your electronic [HEAR](#).

Uncapped marks

The Board of Examiners can allow you to resit an assessment for uncapped marks if you have accepted extenuating circumstances. This means that the full range of marks is available to be awarded, and will not be capped at 40. Certain variations may affect the nature of the capping process.

Variations

A variation is a change or addition to the standard Rules which must also be achieved in order for you to be awarded the credit. They are an exception and apply only to some courses. They are described in the [Variations to the Rules of Assessment](#). These variations could take the form of a higher pass mark or additional requirements to pass individual units of assessment, for example an exam. They are often to meet the needs of professional, statutory or regulatory bodies. It is important that you know whether any variations apply to your course.

Voluntary Reassessment

A Board of Examiners may offer reassessment in an exam and/or coursework for a failed module even where it is not compulsory for you to pass the module or where you have already passed the module. Voluntary reassessment can provide an opportunity to obtain the maximum credit available for the Year or improve your mark in the relevant module(s). For example, you may have passed a module but your performance was affected by extenuating circumstances so you choose reassessment in an attempt to improve it.

You may also choose voluntary reassessment at the end of your Final Year. If you have achieved the credits required to be awarded your degree, but have failed up to a total of 30 non-core credits in the Final Year, you will be offered voluntary reassessment in these credits for capped module marks. Voluntary reassessment must be attempted within the same Year. The highest mark you achieve for the failed module(s) will be used for your final degree classification up to a maximum mark of 40. This will be the only opportunity you will have to retrieve these fails.

Weighting

A proportion or percentage given to your Year mark to indicate its relevant importance when calculating your Degree mark (see under '[Degree mark](#)').

Withdrawal

You will be required to leave the University if:

- (a) Your year mark is less than 20; or
- (b) You have failed the same module after three attempts and that module is either a core module or you need the module credits in order to be awarded your degree; or
- (c) You cannot complete your studies in your maximum period.

If you were first registered in October 2018 or earlier and were offered reassessment in the academic year 2018-19 or previously, you would have been withdrawn if;

- (d) You were absent from all compulsory examinations without notifying the University of your absence and /or undertook none of the compulsory reassessment.

If you fail the Placement Year or Year Abroad you will be offered the opportunity to transfer to an appropriate three-year course if this is possible.

You may also be required to leave in certain circumstances under the Academic Procedures, the Progress Procedures for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students, the Student Code of Conduct, the Fitness to Practice Procedure or for failure to register with the University or to pay fees owed to the University.

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Alternatively you may decide to discontinue your studies at the University with no intention of returning to continue them in the future.

The Board of Examiners will consider you for an Exit Award (see under [Exit Award](#)).

Year

A Year of study is a unit of learning at the end of which assessment will be considered by a Board of Examiners, marks ratified and decisions on progression made or an award conferred. For the purposes of the Rules of Assessment, a Year for most undergraduate students is one year of full-time study. Years of study are not equivalent to the number of years studying but the stage of the course you are on. For example, if you have to repeat Year One, you will have been studying at the University for two years but you will still be in the first Year of your programme.

Year Abroad

The University offers the opportunity for you to undertake a year of study at another institution outside of the UK. This can be as part of a course of study or an option chosen by you to incorporate into your degree programme. You should be aware that in order to qualify for a Year Abroad there are additional requirements that you must meet which are set out in the Four-Year Rules of Assessment. You should also see these Rules for the different ways that the Year Abroad may be counted towards your overall degree

You will be assessed on the best 75% of the equivalent of 120 credits in the Learning Agreement. The outcome will be assigned a notional credit weighting to ensure that all the credits used to determine the average mark for the year abroad add up to 75% of the total credits taken. A weighted average mark (using this notional weight for the module raising the weighting to 75%) for the selected modules will then be calculated and if that mark is at or above the host institution's pass mark you will be deemed to have passed the year abroad.

Zero-Weighting

The Board of Examiners may make a decision, in the case of accepted extenuating circumstances, to zero-weight individual pieces of assessment of your current year of study. This means that the marks achieved in this assessment will not count towards your overall module aggregate.

End of document

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