

**UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX
GRADUATE SCHOOL**

RULES OF ASSESSMENT FOR TAUGHT MASTERS DEGREES 2011/12

EAST 15 ACTING SCHOOL

MFA Theatre Directing
MFA Acting (International)

1. PREAMBLE

- a) These rules apply to the East 15 Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Directing course. The rules should be read in conjunction with the relevant Programme Structure, Programme Specification and on-line Module Directory entries. The Module Directory will give 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 programme structure and passed, with no condonement of marks below a pass allowed.
 - c) East 15 Masters degrees can be awarded with distinction and merit.
 - d) It is for the Board of Examiners to determine whether the criteria for an award have been satisfied.
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2. PASS MARK

- a) The pass mark for all modules of the Masters degree is 50.
 - b) For the purposes of these rules taught module averages, the overall weighted average for the taught modules and the mark for the dissertation will be rounded to the nearest whole number – i.e. 49.5 will count as 50, 49.4 as 49.
 - c) The Professional Code of Conduct must be passed where it is an element of the module. The Board of Examiners shall determine that a student has failed a module when the Professional Code of Conduct element of that module is failed.
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3. ELIGIBILITY FOR AN AWARD

THE MASTER OF FINE ARTS DEGREE

Pass

To be awarded a pass in the Masters a student should:

- a) Subject to (d), obtain 300 credits at Masters level (level 7);
- b) Pass all taught core modules and the dissertation;
- c) Pass at least 120 taught module 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 40 credits in non-core taught modules will be condoned provided the overall weighted average for all the taught modules 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 300 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 210 credits at 60 or above, including the dissertation;
- iii) Have no module mark below 50.

b) *Arithmetic Average*

To obtain a merit a student should:

- i) Obtain 300 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 150 credits at 60 or above, which must include the dissertation;
- 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 300 credits at the first attempt, except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 210 credits at 70 or above, including the dissertation;
- iii) Have no module mark below 50.

b) *Arithmetic Average*

To obtain a distinction a student should:

- i) Obtain 300 credits at the first attempt except in the case of substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- ii) Obtain 150 credits at 70 or above, which must include the dissertation;
- iii) Have an overall weighted average mark of 70 or more;
- iv) Have no module mark below 50.

3.2. THE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA and CERTIFICATE

Where a student is either unable to complete their studies or does not achieve the required credits to be awarded a Masters, then the award of either a Postgraduate Diploma or a Postgraduate Certificate will be considered.

The published programme structure will show which taught modules have to be passed in order to obtain a PG Certificate or PG Diploma. In many cases it will be possible to obtain the necessary credits for a PG Diploma by using dissertation credits as well as taught module credits.

3.2.1 To be awarded a POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA a student should:

- a) Normally complete and have been assessed for all the taught Masters modules
- b) Subject to (e), obtain 120 credits at Masters level (level 7);
- c) Pass at least 60 taught module credits at the first attempt;
- d) Pass all taught core modules;
- e) Failure with a mark of 40 or more for up to 30 credits in non-core modules will be condoned provided that the overall weighted average for the 120 PG Diploma credits is 50.

Credits obtained for the dissertation can be used when considering whether a Postgraduate Diploma can be awarded, provided that the above criteria have been met.

3.2.2 To be awarded a POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE a student should:

- a) Subject to (d), obtain 60 taught module credits at Masters level (level 7);
- 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.

4. SECOND ATTEMPTS

4.1 Reassessment opportunities for taught modules

- a) If a student fails a module taken as a reassessment no further reassessment attempt is allowed unless there are substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners.
- b) 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.
- c) 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.

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.

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.

4.1.1 MFA Theatre Directing

- a) Students may have a second attempt for module(s) that have been failed, up to a maximum of 60 taught module credits (30 credits in any one year). A second attempt at the same assessment is not possible because the assessment is not replicable unless failure is in the Logbook assessment only. A reassessment opportunity will be offered in an additional seventh term. Where the same module is available, students will be permitted a second attempt at that module for a maximum mark of 50. If, and only if, the same module is not offered in an academic year, students will be permitted to choose another module from those available for a maximum mark of 50.
- b) No reassessment for a module is permitted prior to the Board of Examiners meeting where marks are confirmed and is subject to departmental arrangements.
- c) The maximum mark that will be recorded for a module as a result of a reassessment opportunity is 50, unless there are substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners.
- d) The mark for the reassessment will count even where it is lower than the original mark.

4.1.2 MFA Acting (International)

- a) Students may have a second attempt for module(s) that have been failed, up to a maximum of 60 taught module credits (30 credits in any one year). A second attempt at the same assessment is not possible because the assessment is not replicable unless failure is in the Logbook assessment only. A second attempt at the assessment as a result of failure in written work for the Independent Study module or in the Reflective Evaluation for the Moscow Field Study module is also available within the same academic year.
- b) In cases of failure in any other form of assessment, students would normally have to repeat the year on a full-time basis for uncapped marks.
- c) In Year Two a second attempt at the same assessment is not possible because the assessment is not replicable. A reassessment opportunity will be offered in an additional seventh term.
- d) No reassessment for a module is permitted prior to the Board of Examiners meeting where marks are confirmed and is subject to departmental arrangements.
- e) The maximum mark that will be recorded for a module as a result of a reassessment opportunity is 50, unless there are substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners.
- f) The mark for the reassessment will count even where it is lower than the original mark.

4.2 Re-submission of Dissertation

4.2.1 Dissertation or Director's Production Workbook (MFA Theatre Directing and MFA Acting (International))

- a) Re-submission of dissertations is only permitted in the following circumstances:
 - i) Either substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted at the discretion of the Board of Examiners; or
 - ii) Where the original mark awarded is at least 40 and the Board of Examiners judges that the work required does not include any additional experimental or practical work.
- b) Re-submission is subject to the following conditions:
 - i) A dissertation must normally be re-submitted within two months of the formal notification of permission to resubmit; in cases of extenuating circumstances, this may be extended to a maximum of twelve months;
 - ii) A dissertation which has been re-submitted because of a marginal fail shall be awarded no more than the minimum pass mark; in the case of re-submissions because of extenuating circumstances, the full range of marks shall be available to examiners.

4.2.2 Practical Project with Written Commentary (5,000 words) (MFA Theatre Directing only)

- a) A Student must pass the Practical Project and Written Commentary in order to qualify for the award of MFA. There is no opportunity for a second attempt at the Practical Project. A student who fails the Practical Project can be considered for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma.
- b) Re-submission is only permitted for the Written Commentary in accordance with rules 4.2.1(a-b) above.

4.2.3 Practical Project and Research Portfolio (including 5,000 word contextualising critical document) (MFA Acting (International) only)

- a) A Student must pass the Practical Project and Research Portfolio in order to qualify for the award of MFA. Reassessment is permitted in accordance with rule 4.2.1 (a) above. There is no opportunity for a second attempt at the Practical Project. A student who fails the Practical Project can be considered for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma.
- b) Re-submission is only permitted for the Research Portfolio in accordance with rules 4.2.1(a-b) above.

5. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

5.1 POWERS OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

The Board of Examiners shall have the following powers:

- a) Confirming the taught module marks achieved, including any resit marks presented to the Board, and awarding credit.
- b) Confirming dissertation/project marks.

- c) Confirming any opportunities for second attempts at the assessment for modules, including resubmission of the dissertation.
- d) Considering each student's marks' profile so that they can be advised on the range of possible award outcomes, including whether it is possible for them to make use of dissertation credits.
- e) Considering extenuating circumstances as necessary and their implications for results.
- f) Determining the appropriate award for each student.
- g) Requiring any student whose performance is below that required to achieve an award to withdraw from the University.

5.1.1 An Interim Board of Examiners Meeting shall be held at the end of the first year and at the end of the taught module assessment in year two.

5.1.2 Students will be required to withdraw where the accumulation of further credit would not result in the achievement of any postgraduate award according to the Rules of Assessment.

5.2 PROGRESSION FROM YEAR ONE TO YEAR TWO

- a) Subject to (b) and (c), obtain 120 credits at Masters level (level 7)
- b) Failure with a mark of 40 or more for up to 40 credits in non-core taught modules, will be condoned¹
- c) Students who have failed up to 30 credits may have a reassessment opportunity. A second attempt will be offered in an additional seventh term (See 4.1(a) above).

5.3 EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Extenuating circumstances can only be considered by the Examination Board if the student has submitted an extenuating circumstances form by the agreed deadline. When substantiated extenuating circumstances are accepted by the Board of Examiners it may use its discretion to depart from the above rules where this is necessary to achieve a fair result.

5.4 DISCRETION

Except in the case of extenuating circumstances (see 5.2 above), the Board of Examiners should restrict its use of discretion to exceptional circumstances. Where the Board of Examiners agrees to exercise its discretion the reasons must be documented as part of the Examination Board report, setting out the reason for exercising discretion and the reason for the decision taken, and a copy sent to the Graduate School.

End

SENATE JUNE 2011

¹ Note that the requirements for award of the Masters degree state that where marks are condoned the overall weighted average for the taught units must be at least 50% at the end of the programme