

UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX

RULES OF ASSESSMENT FOR FULL-TIME TAUGHT MASTERS DEGREES 2023-2024

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

MA Social Work

1. PREAMBLE

- a) These rules apply to the full-time (24 months) Masters Programme named above. The rules should be read in conjunction with the relevant Programme Structure, Programme Specification and online Module Directory entries. The Module Directory will give details of assessment arrangements. The Programme Structure will identify which modules are core for the programme.
- b) A taught module is any assessed component excluding the dissertation or equivalent, which for these programmes are HS659 or HS657. A core module must be taken as part of the programme structure and passed, with no condonement of marks below a pass allowed.
- c) All Masters Degrees can be awarded with Distinction or Merit.
- d) Successful completion of either the MA or the exit award Postgraduate Diploma Social Work entail eligibility to apply for registration with the professional regulator (Social Work England) under the protected title of Social Worker.
- e) It is for the Board of Examiners to determine whether the criteria for an award have been satisfied.

2. PASS MARK

- a) The pass mark for all modules of the Masters degree is 50. Credits are only awarded if the module is passed. In cases where failure with a mark of 40 is condoned, the credits are not awarded however the module mark will still be used to calculate the overall weighted average for the taught modules and the overall weighted average.
- b) For the purposes of these rules taught module averages, the overall weighted average for the taught modules and the mark for the dissertation or equivalent will be rounded to the nearest whole number – i.e. 49.5 will count as 50, 49.4 as 49.
- c) Placements are marked on a pass/fail basis.

3. PROGRESSION TO YEAR 2

A student will only be permitted to progress to Year 2 if they pass a minimum of 15 credits at the first attempt, in addition to passing core modules, unless there are extenuating circumstances accepted as valid by the Board of Examiners. Where the Board accepts a student's extenuating circumstances, the requirements to pass Year 1 must be satisfied before progressing to Year 2.

A student must pass all placements and all assignments in the core modules of the programme.

4. ELIGIBILITY FOR AN AWARD - THE MASTERS DEGREE

Pass

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

- a) Obtained 180 credits at Masters level (level 7);

- b) Pass all the placements and all assignments in the core modules of the programme;
- c) Complete the required number of placement days;
- d) Not be subject to a current referral to Professional Suitability Group;
- e) Have satisfactorily addressed any actions or sanctions imposed at any earlier Fitness to Practise hearing(s) which have concluded or are unfinished;
- f) Must not be subject to an exclusion that prevents them from engaging in direct work with service users as a consequence of concerns over their fitness to practise or their professional conduct;
- g) Pass at least 60 taught module credits at the first attempt unless there are extenuating circumstances accepted as valid by the Board of Examiners.

4.1 Pass with Merit or Distinction

4.1.1 Pass with Merit

To obtain a Merit in addition to achieving the requirements for a pass, a student should:

- Have an overall weighted average mark of 60 or more.

4.1.2 Pass with Distinction

To obtain a Distinction, in addition to achieving the requirements for a pass, a student should:

- Have an overall weighted average mark of 70 or more.

4.2 The Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work, Postgraduate Diploma In Social Care And Postgraduate Certificate In Social Care

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 in Social Work, Postgraduate Diploma in Social Care or a Postgraduate Certificate in Social Care will be considered. Students can be considered for the award of a Distinction or Merit for an exit award.

Departments will identify on the published programme structure 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 or equivalent credits as well as taught module credits.

Dissertation or equivalent credits cannot be used to obtain a Postgraduate Certificate.

4.2.1 Credits obtained for non-core modules cannot be used when considering whether the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work can be awarded, as completion of these, in addition to the necessary core modules, would lead to the awarding of the MA in Social Work.

4.2.2 To be awarded a **POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN SOCIAL WORK** which entails eligibility for professional registration, a student must:

- a) Obtain 135 credits at Masters level (level 7);
- b) Pass all placements and all assignments in the core modules of the programme;
- c) Complete the required number of placement days;

- d) Not be subject to a current referral to Professional Suitability Group;
- e) Have satisfactorily addressed any actions or sanctions imposed at any earlier Fitness to Practise hearing(s) which have concluded or are unfinished;
- f) Must not be subject to an exclusion that prevents them from engaging in direct work with service users as a consequence of concerns over their fitness to practise or their professional conduct;
- g) Pass at least 60 taught module credits at the first attempt unless there are extenuating circumstances accepted as valid by the Board of Examiners;
- h) Failure with a mark of 40 or more for up to 30 credits in non-core modules may be condoned provided that the overall weighted average for the 135 PG Diploma credits is at least 50.

A Pass with Merit or Distinction

Pass with Merit

To obtain a Merit, in addition to achieving the requirements for a Postgraduate Diploma, a student should:

- Have an overall weighted average mark for the 135 PG Diploma credits of 60 or more.

Pass with Distinction

To obtain a Distinction, in addition to achieving the requirements for a Postgraduate Diploma, a student should:

- Have an overall weighted average mark for the 135 PG Diploma credits of 70 or more.

4.2.3 To be awarded a **POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN SOCIAL CARE** a student should:

- a) Attempt 120 credits at Masters level (level 7) of which 90 must be passed, with the remaining credits condoned subject to (c);
- b) Pass at least 60 taught module credits at the first attempt unless there are extenuating circumstances accepted as valid by the Board of Examiners;
- c) Failure with a mark of 40 or more for up to 30 credits in non-core modules may be condoned provided that the overall weighted average for the 120 PG Diploma credits is 50.

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

For the purposes of this exit award, all modules are compulsory.

A Pass with Merit or Distinction

Where a student has more than 120 credits, the best credits compatible with the structure for a Postgraduate Diploma giving at least 120 credits will be used to calculate the overall weighted average mark.

Pass with Merit

To obtain a Merit, in addition to achieving the requirements for a Postgraduate Diploma, a student should:

- Have an overall weighted average mark for the 120 PG Diploma credits of 60 or more.

Pass with Distinction

To obtain a Distinction, in addition to achieving the requirements for a Postgraduate Diploma, a student should:

- Have an overall weighted average mark for the 120 PG Diploma credits of 70 or more.

NB the exit award of Postgraduate Diploma in Social Care is an academic award and does not provide recipients with the eligibility to register with Social Work England.

4.2.4 To be awarded a **POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN SOCIAL CARE** a student should:

- a) Attempt 60 credits at Masters level (level 7) of which 40 must be passed, with the remaining credits condoned, subject to (c);
- b) Pass 15 credits at the first attempt unless there are substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners;
- c) Failure with a mark of 40 or more for up to 20 credits, in non-core modules, may be condoned.

For the purposes of this exit award, all modules are compulsory.

A Pass with Merit or Distinction

Where a student has more than 60 credits, the best credits compatible with the structure for a Postgraduate Certificate giving at least 60 credits will be used to calculate the overall weighted average mark.

Pass with Merit

To obtain a Merit, in addition to achieving the requirements for a Postgraduate Certificate, a student should:

- Have an overall weighted average mark for the 60 PG Certificate credits of 60 or more.

Pass with Distinction

To obtain a Distinction, in addition to achieving the requirements for a Postgraduate Certificate, a student should:

- Have an overall weighted average mark for the 60 PG Certificate credits of 70 or more.

NB the exit award of Postgraduate Certificate in Social Care is an academic award and does not provide recipients with the eligibility to register with Social Work England.

5. REASSESSMENT

5.1. Reassessment for taught modules

- a) Students may have a second attempt for module(s) that have been failed, up to a maximum of 60 taught module credits;
- b) No second attempt at the assessment for a module is permitted prior to the Board of Examiners meeting where marks are confirmed;
- c) The maximum mark that will be recorded for a module as a result of a second attempt is 50, unless there are extenuating circumstances accepted as valid by the Board of Examiners;
- d) Where all individual components of assessment must be passed in order to

pass the module only one opportunity to resubmit the failed component will be offered;

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

f) When a reassessment opportunity in a component leading to a numerical mark is offered the module aggregate will be calculated as follows:

i) Where students are not required to pass all the individual components of a module, the maximum mark that will be recorded for a module as a result of a second attempt is 50;

ii) Where students are required to pass all individual components of assessment, a pre-resubmission module aggregate will be calculated using the failed mark(s):

- If the pre-resubmission module aggregate was below the pass mark then the resubmission can improve the module aggregate mark up to the pass mark only;
- If the pre-resubmission module aggregate was above the pass mark then the resubmission cannot improve the module aggregate mark. The module aggregate is capped at the pre-resubmission aggregate.

5.1.1 If a student fails a module on the second attempt at the assessment no further attempt is allowed unless there are extenuating circumstances accepted as valid by the Board of Examiners.

5.1.2 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.

5.1.3 A student cannot be permitted to repeat a module unless permitted by the Board of Examiners because of extenuating circumstances accepted as valid.

5.1.4 Where a student has not met the requirements to pass and is eligible to undertake reassessment and/or have failed marks condoned, the Board of Examiners will give the student the opportunity to undertake reassessment. The timing of the reassessment will depend on the student's year of study and what type of modules they have failed.

5.1.5 Students who fail modules will be required to undertake reassessment at the first available opportunity (normally during the summer vacation) where they have failed a core module, or have failed a module with a mark below 40, or have failed more than 40 credits' worth of non-core credits with marks in the 40-49 range.

5.2 Reassessment for a placement

- a) Failed placements are permitted to be retaken;
- b) If a student fails a placement on the second attempt, no further attempt is allowed and the student will be required to withdraw. If they submit Extenuating Circumstances and they are accepted as valid, the Board of Examiners may be able to offer additional assessment opportunities, such as reassessment for uncapped module marks or voluntary reassessment, in line with the Extenuating Circumstances [Policy](#) and [guidelines](#).

5.3 Resubmission of Dissertation or equivalent

- a) Resubmission of dissertations or equivalent is only permitted in the following circumstances:
 - i) Either extenuating circumstances accepted as valid by 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 to achieve a pass does not include any additional primary data collection.
- b) Resubmission is subject to the following conditions:
- i) A dissertation or equivalent must normally be resubmitted 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 or equivalent which has been resubmitted because of a marginal fail shall be awarded no more than a maximum mark of 50; in the case of resubmissions because of extenuating circumstances, the full range of marks shall be available to examiners.

6. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

6.1. Powers of the Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners shall have the following powers:

- a) Confirming the taught module marks achieved, including any marks for reassessment presented to the Board, and awarding credit;
- b) Confirming the mark for the dissertation or equivalent, including any mark for resubmission;
- c) Confirming any opportunities for reassessment for modules, including resubmission of the dissertation or equivalent; and any opportunities for condonement;

- 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 or equivalent credits;
- e) Considering extenuating circumstances as necessary and their implications for results;
- f) Determining the appropriate award for each student;
- g) Determining whether a student can progress to the second year;
- h) Requiring any student whose performance is below that required to achieve an award to withdraw from the University.

6.1.1. An Interim Board of Examiners Meeting shall normally be held at the end of a year of study and at the end of the taught module assessment.

6.1.2. Where a student has not met the requirements to pass and is eligible to undertake reassessment and/or have failed marks condoned, the Board of Examiners will give the student the opportunity to undertake reassessment across the summer

6.1.3. 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.

6.2. Extenuating Circumstances

If you submit Extenuating Circumstances and they are accepted as valid, the Board of Examiners may be able to offer additional assessment opportunities, such as reassessment for uncapped module marks or voluntary reassessment, in line with the Extenuating Circumstances [Policy](#) and [guidelines](#). When extenuating

circumstances are accepted, the Board of Examiners will use its discretion to determine what if any action should be taken in accordance with the powers set out in the Policy. Except in the case of accepted extenuating circumstances, Boards of Examiners do not have powers of discretion in relation to the application of the Rules of Assessment.

End

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