

University of Essex

Rules of Assessment for Full-Time Postgraduate Diplomas 2025- 2026

(Where offered as a stand-alone award)

1. Preamble

a) These rules apply to full-time (9 months) postgraduate diploma programmes. 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 Programme.

b) A taught module is any assessed component excluding the dissertation or equivalent. A core module must be taken as part of the programme structure and passed, with no condonement of marks below a pass allowed.

c) 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 components of the postgraduate diploma 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.

b) For the purposes of these rules taught module averages and the overall weighted average for the taught modules will be rounded to the nearest whole number – i.e., 49.5 will count as 50, 49.4 as 49.

3. Eligibility for an Award

The Postgraduate Diploma

Pass

To be awarded a pass in the Postgraduate Diploma a student should:

- a) Attempt 120 credits at Master's Level (Level 7) of which 90 must be passed, with the remaining credits condoned, subject to (c).
- b) Pass all the taught core modules.
- c) Failure with a mark of 40 or more for up to 30 credits in non-core taught modules will be condoned provided the overall weighted average for the programme is 50.

3.1. A Pass with Merit or Distinction

3.1.1 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.

3.1.2 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.

3.2 The Postgraduate Certificate

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

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

3.2.1 Pass

The pass mark for all Postgraduate Certificate modules is 50.

3.2.2 To be awarded a pass in the **Postgraduate Certificate** a student should:

- a) Attempt 60 credits at Master's Level (Level 7) of which 40 must be passed, with the remaining credits condoned, subject to (c)
- b) Pass all taught core modules.
- c) Failure with a mark of 40 or more for up to 20 credits, in non-core modules, may be condoned.

A Pass with Merit or Distinction

Where a student has more than 60 credits, the best credits compatible with the structure for the 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.

4. Reassessment

- a) Students who have failed any taught module will have one opportunity to undertake reassessment in that module.
- 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 substantiated extenuating circumstances accepted by the Board of Examiners.
- d) 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.

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

4.2 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. A student cannot be permitted to repeat a module unless permitted by the Board of Examiners because of substantiated extenuating circumstances.

5. Assessment Procedures

5.1 Powers of The Board of Examiners

A Board of Examiners Meeting shall be held with the purpose of:

- 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 modules and any opportunities for condonement.
- c) Considering extenuating circumstances as necessary and their implications for results.
- d) Determining the award of any Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate.
- e) Requiring any student whose performance is below that required to achieve an award to withdraw from the University.

5.2 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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