



REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES  
Assessment, Progression and the Award of a Qualification

**2020-21**

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## REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

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### A. PREAMBLE

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. These Regulations and Code of Practice ('the Code') summarise the University's expectations for the conduct of assessment, progression and the award of a qualification in undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, including those taught at the equivalent of level 3 in the national Qualifications and Credit Framework.
- 1.2. The expectations of the Code are developed with a fundamental commitment to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education ([www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/)), and the awards conferred are benchmarked against the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies ([www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf)). Individual disciplines will also refer to relevant subject benchmark statements.
- 1.3. The relevant sections of this Code may apply to the assessment, progression and completion of any taught components in research degree programmes. For further information please see the regulations for specific degrees in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*: [www.bris.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/cop-research-degrees.html](http://www.bris.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/cop-research-degrees.html).
- 1.4. The Code applies to all taught students, including those who study on a part time basis. For this purpose, where reference is made to 'years of study' the policy must be applied on a pro rata basis and equivalent to the volume of credit that a full-time student would normally undertake in an academic year.
- 1.5. For the purpose of this Code a 'regulation' is defined as: 'a rule set by the University which must be followed'; and a 'policy' as a: 'statement established by common consensus that will be followed, unless there is good and validated reason otherwise.'
- 1.6. **Regulations within the Code may not be varied. They are indicated by boxed text.** The rest of the Code should also be followed. Any requests to depart from the Code must be approved by the relevant Faculty Education Director and must be in accordance with faculty policy. If deemed appropriate, the Learning and Teaching Committee and/or the relevant faculty committees may be consulted by the Faculty Education Director. University and faculty committees will ensure consistency of practice university-wide and will make decisions that take account of the spirit of the Code.

#### ***Application of new or revised regulations***

- 1.7. Students will be subject to the regulations that are in place for the current academic year on registering for that year of study, subject to the following provisions.
- 1.8. Students studying on a part-time basis are subject to the version of the Taught Code that is in place on registering at the start of the **academic year**, unless a change is being phased in. Where this is the case, schools should ensure that students are not disadvantaged by the phasing in of regulation; applying the more favourable (to the

student) regulation in cases where a student first registers on a programme under one regulation, which is then superseded by a revised version of the regulation.

- 1.9. When the University proposes significant changes to the formal University regulation and policies that govern taught programmes:
  - It will consult with the sabbatical officers of the Students' Union and determine whether its implementation would negatively affect existing cohorts of students.
  - Where no negative effects are identified, the change may be applied universally to all student cohorts, normally from the beginning of an academic year;
  - Otherwise, a change may only be introduced for new first-year cohort registrations and phased in (please see 1.12 for those regulations or policies that are currently being phased in).
- 1.10. Where a change is being phased in (as above):
  - Newly registered students who do not enter into the first year of a programme will be subject to the regulations that are in place for the student cohort that they are joining.
  - Those students who initially registered under one set of regulations and who subsequently join a different cohort that is governed by a different set of regulations (e.g. through a suspension of studies, a requirement to repeat a year or undertake a supplementary year) will become subject to the new regulations on registration into the new cohort.
- 1.11. Should there be uncertainty about which set of regulations cover a particular student, a decision should be made that reflects the best interests of the student.
- 1.12. The following regulations and policies within this version of the Taught Code are currently being phased in:
  - The credit requirements for the qualification of an integrated masters degree that includes a year away from the University – to apply to new registrations from the 2017/18 academic year (see 4.19).

## 2. Significant Changes to the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes for 2020-21

Change	<p>30.13 Notwithstanding 30.7, the relevant Board of Examiners will award credit to an undergraduate student to permit progression, despite failure to achieve a pass mark associated with taught unit(s) at the first attempt* (i.e. a 'compensated pass'), provided conditions (a)-(f) are satisfied.</p> <p><u>*when considering whether to apply compensation, the exam board should only consider the unit marks achieved at the first attempt within a year of study for a student.</u></p>
Rationale	<p>In undergraduate programmes, compensation may only be applied at the first attempt to enable progression at the point that it is applied by the exam board; clarification is provided as to what constitutes a 'first attempt' given that an exam board may receive marks with differing attempts at different points during the year.</p>

Change	<p>30.19 ...<u>A Faculty Board of Examiners may also choose to award 120 credit points on the basis of a pass overall in assessment in the relevant year of study in order for an exit award to be made</u></p>
Rationale	<p>An exam board may currently award 120 credit points for the final year of undergraduate study on the basis of a pass overall and achieving the pass mark for any must-pass units to enable a student to complete a programme. Similarly, it may do the same for Ordinary Degrees, or Undergraduate Diplomas or Certificates. The above change extends that principle to exit awards.</p>

Change	<p><del>Credit framework (notes:)-Individual students can take units at a higher level than normally specified during their programme, e.g. a level 7 unit might be substituted for a level 6 unit, or a level 6 unit might replace one at level 5.-(stated in the notes accompanying the University's credit framework)</del></p>
Rationale	<p>The note attached to the University's credit framework has been removed given that individual students are not normally expected to take units at a higher level of study than the level of their current year of study.</p>

Change	<p>26.13 <u>A student on a [study abroad year or year in industry] must achieve at least the pass mark for the [study abroad year or year in industry] unit to be awarded the credit.</u></p> <p>26.14 <u>Progression from the [study abroad year or year in industry] will be permitted where a student achieves 120 credit points with an overall year mark of at least 40 out of 100. A student who does not achieve the pass mark for a study abroad or placement unit and/or does not achieve the necessary criteria for progression should be transferred onto the appropriate point on an equivalent degree programme, as determined by the exam board.</u></p>
Rationale	<p>A clarification has been added to explicit set out the requirements to achieve the credit and 'pass' a study abroad year or year in industry and thus progress within the programme. Where the student does not meet the requirements for progression, they are transferred to the standard equivalent degree programme.</p>

Change	<p>32.12 <del>The honours programme classification boundary ranges</del> <u>for bachelors honours programmes</u> are based on marks out of 100 and are:</p>
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	<p> <i>First / 2.1 equal to or more than 68 but less than 70</i>  <i>2.1 / 2.2 equal to or more than 58 but less than 60</i>  <i>2.2 / Third equal to or more than 48 but less than 50</i>  <i>Third / Fail equal to or more than 38 but less than 40</i> </p> <p><i>If the final summative programme mark falls within the range of one of these classification boundaries, the secondary rule will apply.</i></p> <p><u><i>32.13 The classification boundary ranges for integrated masters programmes are based on marks out of 100 and are:</i></u></p> <p> <u><i>First / 2.1 equal to or more than 68 but less than 70</i></u>  <u><i>2.1 / 2.2 equal to or more than 58 but less than 60</i></u> </p> <p><u><i>If the final summative programme mark falls within the range of one of these classification boundaries, the secondary rule will apply.</i></u></p>
Rationale	<p>The 'secondary rule' applies where a final summative programme mark (in undergraduate modular programmes) falls within two marks below a classification boundary. The above amendments recognise that a student with a final programme mark of less than 40 (at the third class/fail border) will not be in a position to be considered for a classified degree. The same applies for the lower second/third class border in integrated masters degree programmes where a student would not be in a position to be considered for a third class degree (i.e. a mark under 50 would mean the student does not have sufficient credit points for the award of the degree).</p>
Change	<p>17.4 ... For modular programmes: <u><i>the late submission of work will incur a fixed absolute penalty of 10 marks is applied for each 24-hour period after the agreed deadline, where that period includes a working day, each working day work is submitted after the agreed submission deadline. A mark of zero is applied to work submitted five or more working days after the agreed deadline if this threshold is not already reached. If the work is submitted so late that at least five such 24-hour periods have elapsed, the mark awarded will automatically default to zero.</i></u></p> <p><u><i>17.6 For group coursework, it is the collective responsibility of the student group to ensure and confirm that the work is submitted before the deadline. Students involved in group work for assessment may also be required to individually provide evidence of their participation in and contribution to the work of the group.</i></u></p> <p><u><i>If group work is submitted late, the penalty applied to the marks of individual student(s) may be retracted where there is evidence that they have satisfactorily contributed to the group work in time for the work to be submitted by the deadline, as determined by the Unit Director or other member of academic staff.</i></u></p>
Rationale	<p>The University has a policy in place governing the late submission of summative coursework in the form of a mark deduction from the mark that an individual student would have achieved.</p> <p>The changes clarify the timeframe of each 24-hour period immediately following the submission deadline when applying penalties and that it is the responsibility of the student group to ensure and confirm that the group work is submitted before the deadline.</p>
Change	<p><u><i>39.3 The dissertation mark should be rounded to the nearest integer, where applicable</i></u></p>
Rationale	<p>Confirmation that the dissertation mark should be an integer (i.e. rounded to the nearest full mark, if required) when classifying a degree.</p>

Change	<u>19.5 Students should provide an independently certified English translation for any evidence that was originally produced in another language. Such evidence will not normally be accepted without the English translation.</u>
Rationale	For a special consideration or accommodation regarding a student's study to be considered, the University often requires evidence of the circumstance. The change confirms that any evidence must be translated into English for it to be accepted.

Change	Replicate existing clause regarding the outcome of self-certificating absence from an examination in the UG and PGT progression sections:  30.9 / 38.10 <u>Students who are absent from an examination due to illness and who self-certificate, will be required to undertake the examination at the next scheduled time the examination is run, normally in the August / September assessment period. The form of the assessment should remain unchanged.</u>
Rationale	To confirm in the 'progression and completion' sections of the Taught Code that students who have self-certified absence from an exam will be required to undertake the exam at the next time it is scheduled, normally in the same form and in August, before completing their programme of study. This includes students in their final year of study.

Change	30.18 <i>Re-assessment of units within the final year of undergraduate modular programmes is permitted where a failed unit is deemed to be 'must-pass' (e.g. for professional accreditation reasons), in which case the Faculty Board of Examiners will offer the student a final re-assessment opportunity. <u>A re-sit should test those assessments in the unit that have been failed and need not be in the same form as the original assessment, as long as it tests the same learning outcomes and does not compromise any competence standards.</u></i>  19.25-28 <i>In the case of [non-final year undergraduate students on modular programmes / final year undergraduate students on UG modular programmes / taught postgraduate students in the taught component of the programme], if a student has extenuating circumstances which have been accepted, the Board of Examiners may decide to (but not exclusively):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>permit the student to repeat the assessment <u>(in the same or alternative form)</u> without <u>losing an attempt</u> penalty (i.e. as for the first attempt) where a fail mark prevents the credit points being awarded for the unit;</i></li> </ul>
Rationale	Clarification of the circumstances in which the form of the assessment may be modified when a student is re-taking or repeating (due to extenuating circumstances) it.

Change	A new point of policy and set of expectations have been introduced into section 15 with regard to internal moderation.
Rationale	A set of institutional-level expectations underpins existing moderation strategies ensuring that marking processes are robust and treats students fairly.

Change	9.6 <u>For students holding a Tier 4 visa who need to re-take a limited number of units during a supplementary year, in order to retain their visa, the student must be taking at least one unit in each teaching block, and that unit must be:</u>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>the unit that was previously failed; or</u></li> <li>• <u>if that unit is no longer offered, an appropriate replacement unit for the original unit.</u></li> </ul>
Rationale	The policy on supplementary years in relation to visa-holding students has been revised to restrict these students to undertaking only those units that are required by the relevant exam board in order for the student to complete their programme of study.

### Annexes

- 1: Added definitions of 'attempt', 'integrated masters – types', 'year mark' and 'working day'.
- 2: Removed specific programme regs for Diploma in Dental Therapy and Diploma in Dental Hygiene
- 3: Amendments to the University Examination Regulations:
  - Clarification that where a student is accompanied by a representative at a formal interview, this representative will be able to address the meeting and to confer with the student during the meeting, but they will not be permitted to answer any questions on behalf of the student, unless in exceptional circumstances where they are appropriately trained and the student is not able to do so themselves.
  - Updates to the appeals process, including that the University Stage decision is normally issued within 15 working days of the date of the Review Panel.

## B. ALL TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

### 3. Academic Integrity

- 3.1 Students and staff are expected to commit to the values of academic integrity and to uphold high standards. The core values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage form the foundations of the University's approach. Academic integrity is integral to university study and academic life.
- 3.2 Students are responsible, with appropriate guidance, for adopting academic integrity in all areas of their studies, including in relation to assessment. The academic integrity approach contributes to students' personal and intellectual development within a community and culture of learning.
- 3.3 The University combines developing and nurturing academic integrity with a recognition that transgressions undermine its core values. Academic misconduct is taken seriously, and suspected transgressions are investigated, with a set of penalties available when academic misconduct has been proven (see sections 2-4 of the Examination Regulations at Annex 3).
- 3.4 The academic integrity policy, which applies to all levels of study, sets out the University's approach and defines a common understanding of academic integrity, including on its values and on responsibilities.
- 3.5 Please see the [University's policy on academic integrity](#) for more information.

### 4. Programme Structure and Design

The qualifications of the University approved for award by Senate and governed by the regulations in this section, are provided at [www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/annex/annex-UG\\_PGT\\_quallist.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/annex/annex-UG_PGT_quallist.html).

Additionally, the regulations for the specific programmes: MBChB, BDS, BVSc, Gateway to Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science, MSc in Veterinary Sciences and Postgraduate Diploma in Veterinary Clinical Practice, BSc in Veterinary Nursing and Bioveterinary Sciences and Veterinary Nursing and Companion Animal Behaviour, BSc in Dental Hygiene and Therapy, the International Foundation Programme (in the Centre for Academic Language and Development and in Medicine and Dentistry), Postgraduate Certificate in Education, Graduate Diploma, MA in Law, MSc in Social Work, postgraduate programmes in Clinical Neuropsychology and the Pre-Sessional Language Courses are available at annex 2.

The development of taught programmes across the University are underpinned by the expectations of the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) UK Quality Code.

- 4.1 Each degree programme is the responsibility of the relevant faculty, subject to approval by Senate. Faculty Boards shall determine the programmes to be offered for each degree, diploma or certificate within the faculty and the units to be taken within each programme.
- 4.2 Every degree programme must be justified on academic grounds and the level of demand for them must be sufficient to merit the use of the resources required for delivery.
- 4.3 Faculties must adhere to the established procedures for the approval of named degree programmes.

- 4.4 Control over entry to any programme or unit rests with faculties (programmes) and schools (units). This includes the evaluation and acceptance of students transferring from other institutions or internally within the University.
- 4.5 All new and existing undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes must be fully modular in structure, with the exception of the MB,ChB, BDS and BVSc programmes and Gateway variants.
- 4.6 Faculties and schools must specify the constituent units for all existing and any new programmes in the programme specification, as well as the programme aims, intended learning outcomes, any opportunities for conditional progression and the status of those units within its structure, including whether they are 'must-pass'. The programme specification is also the definitive record for any programme-level rules on the award of credit, student progression and qualifying for the intended or exit award.
- 4.7 Subject to the approval of Faculty Boards and Senate, schools shall determine: (i) the content and duration of each unit and the criteria for its satisfactory completion; (ii) the value in terms of credit points and level to be assigned to each unit; and (iii) the pre-requisites and co-requisites associated with each unit.
- 4.8 Faculties and schools whose programmes or units are either validated by professional bodies or which are required to adhere to curricular content specified by professional bodies will establish with those organisations what constitutes an acceptable curricular structure.
- 4.9 Where distance learning is required or offered for part of, or whole of, a programme, faculties and schools must consider and fulfil the principles for the design and delivery of programmes by distance learning, available from: [www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/approve/approvalguidance/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/approve/approvalguidance/).

### ***Unit sizes and structure of the teaching year***

- 4.10 The University's standard unit sizes are 10, 20, 30, 40 and 60 credit points. A single 120 credit point undergraduate unit which encompasses a full academic year where the student is studying abroad or in industry is also permitted.
- 4.11 In postgraduate taught programmes, units of more than 60 credit points are permitted to accommodate projects or dissertations.
- 4.12 Faculties and schools must ensure that programmes and units conform to the structure of the academic year as laid out by Senate.

Units should not span more than one academic year. A unit may only be scheduled to run outside of the agreed structure where there are good pedagogic reasons so to do when approved by the University Education Committee.

### ***Levels of study - programmes***

- 4.13 The University of Bristol, in accordance with Ordinance 19 and the national Qualifications Framework, awards the following taught academic qualifications:
- Masters Degree – at level 7
  - Integrated Masters Degree – at level 7
  - First Degrees in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science – at level 7
  - Postgraduate Diploma – at level 7
  - Postgraduate Certificate – at level 7
  - Postgraduate Certificate in Education – at level 6
  - Graduate Diploma – at level 6

- Graduate Certificate – at level 6
- Bachelors Degree (with and without Honours) – at level 6
- Diploma of Higher Education – at level 5
- Certificate of Higher Education – at level 4

4.14 The University also provides a number of programmes that prepare students for study at degree level:

- Gateway Year – a year of study at level 4 that is integrated with and prepares students for studying on an identified non-modular professional degree programme. Such years of study are subject to specific programme regulations (see annex 2).
- Preliminary Year – a year of study at level 4 or equivalent to level 3 in the national Qualifications and Credit Framework that is integrated with and prepares students for studying on an identified modular degree programme. Such years of study are subject to general regulations (see section 25).
- Foundation Year – a year of study in a stand-alone programme at level 4 or equivalent to level 3 in the national Qualifications and Credit Framework that prepares students for admission to higher education generally. Such years of study are subject to this Code, with any deviations being captured in specific programme regulations.

4.15 A student who has completed the preliminary or foundation year by passing all the units but who does not proceed onto a University of Bristol programme will receive a University certificate, as specified in the relevant regulations.

### ***Levels of study - units***

4.16 The following levels of credit are used by the University, in accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies:

- level 4 units that are normally taken as part of the first year of an undergraduate programme,
- level 5 units that are normally taken as part of the second, third or final year of an undergraduate programme.
- level 6 units that are normally taken as part of the third or final year of an undergraduate programme.
- level 7 units that are normally taken as part of the final year of a masters or integrated masters programme or the year abroad.

Units may be provided that are equivalent to level 3, as established in the UK Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), where they feature in preliminary year or foundation year programmes.

### ***Credit***

4.17 The University's credit framework, which summarises the amount and level of credit required to receive a University award, is reproduced on the following page.

4.18 The amount and level of credit specified in the tables should be regarded as the minimum. If a school wishes to diverge from these amounts, the faculty must seek University level approval, through the University Education Committee.

#### 4.19 The University's Credit Framework:

Qualification	FHEQ Level	Total credits required	Minimum credits required at the highest level*	Equivalent ECTS credits	Additional credit requirements
Taught Masters degree	7	At least 180	150	The minimum requirement is 60, however, a range of 90-120 is more typical.	
Integrated Masters degree	7	At least 480	120		Where the programme includes a year away from the University: at least 60 credit points at level 6 in the year spent away from the University and at least 60 credit points at level 7 in the final year**
Postgraduate Diploma	7	At least 120	90		Remaining credits to be at level 4 or higher
Postgraduate Certificate (including the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE))	7	At least 60	40		
Bachelors degree with honours	6	At least 360	90	180 - 240	Remaining credits to include at least 100 at level 5 or above
Bachelors degree (Ordinary degree)	6	At least 300	60		
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	6	At least 60	40		
Graduate Diploma	6	At least 80	80		Students may undertake a curriculum of 120 credit points
Graduate Certificate	6	At least 40	40		
Foundation Degree	5	At least 240	90		
Diploma of Higher Education in (Faculty name) (Subject)	5	At least 240	90	Approx. 120	Remaining credits at level 4 or above.
Certificate of Higher Education in (Faculty name) (Subject)	4	At least 120	120		

\* The highest level is the level of the qualification

\*\* Applies to new registrations from the 2017/18 academic year

**Notes:**

- 1 This table should be read in conjunction with the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Awarding Bodies. The University's credit framework will apply in cases where the credit requirement is higher than that stated in the national credit framework.
- 2 The MB,ChB (Medicine), BDS (Dentistry), BVSc (Veterinary Science) and Gateway undergraduate programmes are not included in the University's modular structure.
- 3 At the discretion of the faculty joint honours degrees may vary from the minimum of 90 credits at level 6 because of the need for more flexible structures in joint programmes.
- 4 The University's qualifications relate to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA) as follows:

Doctoral degrees	Third Cycle Qualifications (Not typically credit rated)
Masters degrees	Second Cycle Qualifications (Min. 60 ECTS credits, however a range of 90-120 ECTS credits is typical)
Integrated Masters degrees	Second Cycle Qualifications (As above)
Bachelors degrees with Honours	First Cycle Qualifications (180-240 ECTS credits)
Foundation degrees	Short Cycle Qualifications (120 ECTS credits)
Diplomas of Higher Education	As above

### ***Credit points***

- 4.20 In assigning credit points to units, faculties and schools are required to use total student input per normal full-time year of study as a measure. An average of 40 hours per week of total student input in teaching time is suggested as an appropriate measure of the time an average student will need to spend to be able to complete the assessment for a programme successfully. One credit point represents approximately 10 notional hours of student input.
- 4.21 The attainment of additional credit points in any year of study cannot be carried forward in such a way as to reduce the volume of credit that must be taken in any succeeding year, or to accelerate a student's progress towards any award.
- 4.22 A unit shared by students studying on more than one programme must always be allocated the same credit points.
- 4.23 For awards of the University of Bristol, credit points may only be used once and may not be used towards two or more awards of this University or another higher education provider and the University, with the exceptions as specified in clauses 24.10 and 34.5.
- 4.24 It is the responsibility of the relevant Faculty Board of Examiners to determine whether a student has satisfied the criteria for the award of credit points.

### ***Shared teaching between undergraduates and postgraduates***

- 4.25 Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students may be taught together. If undergraduate and taught postgraduate students undertake the same unit, with the same learning outcomes and assessment, the credit awarded will be at the pre-defined level of the unit. If the learning outcomes and assessment differ for the undergraduate and postgraduate students, then they are deemed to be undertaking different units; such units must have been previously approved at the different levels.

## **ADMISSION AND STUDY**

The 'Student Agreement' sets out the terms and conditions that form the basis of the relationship between the student and the University, see:

[www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/).

### **5. Recognition of Prior Learning**

*Guidance for students on the application process for the recognition of prior learning in taught programmes is available at:*

[www.bristol.ac.uk/university/governance/policies/admissions/prior-learning.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/governance/policies/admissions/prior-learning.html).

#### *Definitions*

- 5.1 The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL – previously known as 'APL') is a process whereby students can be exempt from some parts of their chosen programme of academic study by recognition of their learning from previous experiences or achievements as part of the admissions process.
- Recognised Prior 'Certified' Learning is the achievement of learning that has been formally assessed and certificated from previous study with a higher education organisation.
  - Recognised Prior 'Experiential' Learning is the non-certified acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge, gained through relevant experience, which is capable of being evaluated.
- 5.2 Some programmes have approved units/periods of study undertaken at another institution or in the workplace. Where this is a recognised part of an approved programme this policy does not apply.
- 5.3 The term 'prior learning' does not include the learning implicit in formal teaching, a work placement, group work or independent study designed as part of a programme of study alone. Recognition of such parallel learning would be expected to occur in the formal assessment practice of the programme.

#### *Principles*

- 5.4 It is the achievement of learning, or outcomes of the learning, and not just the experience of the activities that is being accredited. In all cases evidence must be presented to the University that such learning has taken place.
- 5.5 Evidence for acceptance of RPL should demonstrate that the learner has a reasonable expectation of satisfactorily completing the programme for which they are applying.
- 5.6 Students will not be admitted to any programme with prior learning if they already hold a degree in the same subject.
- 5.7 Students may request to view additional criteria, by which it judges applications for RPL.
- 5.8 Faculties (i.e. the Faculty Admissions and Recruitment Officer and/or the Faculty Education Director) are responsible for deciding whether to admit a student with recognition of their prior learning and the relevant entry point into the programme, on the recommendation of the school (e.g. the programme director).
- 5.9 Prior learning will not normally be accepted if five or more years have elapsed since it occurred unless the applicant can provide evidence that their learning has continued in a professional or similar context. In such cases the school may choose to set an assessment to test an applicant's current knowledge.



5.10 To complement the University's credit framework (see section 4) the following table shows maximum amounts of credit for each type of programme that can be counted as prior learning.

The maximum amount of certified prior learning may be exceeded where a student is returning to undertake a 'top-up' qualification, provided that the lower award is still relevant to the higher qualification.

<b>Award type</b>	<b>Number of credit points for award</b>	<b>Total amount of RPL permitted</b>
Postgraduate Level Award		
Masters Degree	180	60
Postgraduate Diploma	120	40
Postgraduate Certificate	60	20
Undergraduate Level Award		
Graduate Diploma	120	40
Graduate Certificate	60	20
Integrated Masters Degree		
• Four-year	480	240
• Five-year	600	240
Honours Bachelors Degree		
• Three-year	360	240
• Four-year	480	240
Undergraduate Diploma	240	120
Undergraduate Certificate	120	0

Prior learning in the undergraduate professional programmes of BDS, MBChB and BVSc may be accepted in lieu of an individual unit, at the discretion of the relevant Programme Director.

5.11 The conferring of one of the awards listed in the table and the recognition of prior learning within this is complemented by the following:

- a) Sufficient credit at the highest level of the award, as outlined in the University's credit framework, must be taken at the University of Bristol (or, for a Joint Award, one of its partner institutions) in order for the award to be conferred.
- b) The final 120 credit points of an undergraduate degree programme must be taken and satisfactorily completed at the University of Bristol unless there is a specific agreement to the contrary that has been approved by Senate, therefore it follows that the University will not normally accredit prior learning within the final year of its bachelors and integrated masters programmes.
- c) The dissertation or research component of a taught postgraduate programme must be taken and satisfactorily completed at the University of Bristol (or, for a Joint Award, one of its partner institutions).

### *Recognising Prior Certified Learning*

- 5.12 Schools should consider the learning which has been accredited and decide, in the best interests of the student, how this can be taken into account. It is at the discretion of the school to decide if: (a) the subject content, and therefore knowledge gained, is sufficiently similar for a student to be exempt from unit(s), and (b) if marks can be transferred.
- 5.13 Therefore, prior credit obtained from another institution can be recognised in one of two ways:
- (a) Exemption from units, the marks of which do not contribute to the final award and need not be transferred (University of Bristol accepts the credit awarded by another institution);
  - (b) Exemption from units, the marks of which do contribute to the final award and are transferred (University of Bristol accepts the credit and marks awarded by another institution towards this award).
- 5.14 Students who have previously been required to withdraw from a programme will not normally be re-admitted to the same point on a programme by the recognition of the prior learning.
- 5.15 The requirement to transfer marks may be waived for students transferring into an undergraduate professional programme if there is still a significant proportion (e.g. 360 or more, out of 600 credit points) of the programme to complete.
- 5.16 Where a student is permitted to top-up a qualification, the lower award is subsumed into the higher award made by the University on conferring of that award, in accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding bodies. There is no requirement for a student to 'hand-in' the certificate for the lower award in these circumstances.

### *Recognising Prior Experiential Learning*

- 5.17 Schools should consider each case and decide from which units the student can be exempt. The school should satisfy itself that the applicant has sufficient knowledge and ability to have a reasonable expectation of completing the programme successfully.
- 5.18 If a school is not satisfied that the experiential learning is equivalent to the standard of unit(s), it may require the applicant to undertake an appropriate method of assessment.

See annex 13 on how RPL is applied to the calculation of the final programme mark and/or the degree classification in modular undergraduate programmes.

## **6. Academic Student Support**

Information on the operation of the model, including the responsibilities of the Senior Tutor, Personal Tutor and the student within this are provided in the University's Policy on Academic Personal Tutoring, provided at Annex 4.

- 6.1 Each school will have a coherent academic support model for its students that fits within the framework provided by the Academic Personal Tutoring policy, supported and delivered by (but not limited to) two key roles: the Senior Tutor and the Academic Personal Tutor (or 'personal tutor'). The model will be sensitive to the needs of particular subject cohorts and student groups (e.g. those who study on a part-time basis) and complement the arrangements that are in place regarding students' wellbeing through Wellbeing Advisers and other professional services staff.

- 6.2 All undergraduate and taught postgraduate students will have an allocated Academic Personal Tutor from within their home school, as assigned by the Senior Tutor. The only permitted exception to this is in Schools with exceptionally large cohorts of postgraduate taught students. In these cases, the role of the Academic Personal Tutor may be undertaken by a team of academic staff members.
- 6.3 The Personal Tutor will support and facilitate academic and personal development in partnership with students as they transition to and within their programme of study.
- 6.4 Academic personal tutoring will be underpinned by a regular programme of contact between students and their personal tutors; minimum expectations on the frequency of meetings are set out in the policy.
- 6.5 Each school will have at least one dedicated Senior Tutor, appointed by the Head of School or as part of a faculty team, who will oversee the overall provision of academic student support and the implementation of relevant university regulations and policies and support, advising and supporting Personal Tutors and students as appropriate.
- 6.6 Conversations between the student and the Personal or Senior Tutor are confidential unless the student gives their permission for them to be shared or in an emergency situation.
- 6.7 The school will ensure that all its Senior and Personal Tutors are able to fulfil the functions of the role successfully. New Personal Tutors will be appropriately trained through the University's CREATE programme.
- 6.8 Students will be provided with clear information on the academic support model in place in their school.
- 6.9 The operation of a school's academic support model will be monitored and reviewed by the relevant Senior Tutor, with additional scrutiny by the University Quality Team, where necessary.

## 7. Student Circumstances and Absence due to Illness or Other Cause

### *During the Teaching Period*

- 7.1 If a student is absent due to illness or other cause for **up to and including seven consecutive days** in the teaching period, they should inform their home school as soon as possible and may complete and submit an absence form (available from: [www.bristol.ac.uk/students/services/forms/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/services/forms/)), if required by their programme.
- 7.2 If a student is absent due to illness or other cause for **more than seven consecutive days** in the teaching period, they should inform their home school as soon as possible and may complete an extenuating circumstances form. Additional evidence for the absence may be required, e.g. if the absence is due to illness the student should also attend an appointment with a Medical Practitioner (e.g. a GP) (with the completed form) to obtain a medical certificate ('sick-note'). Both the form and any documented evidence must then be submitted to the relevant school office.

### *In the submission of summative coursework*

- 7.3 Where a circumstance significantly affects the ability of a student to submit work by a deadline the student may present a request for an extension.
- 7.4 The form of the request and how it will be considered will depend on the period of time between when it is set and the deadline.

7.5 Students must otherwise submit work on time unless an extension has been agreed by the School. Schools will not accept late submission without penalty where no extension has been granted, unless exceptionally:

- a student is not aware of the severity of the impact of a circumstance upon their studies at the time, in which case they may bring the circumstance to the attention of the Board of Examiners under the extenuating circumstances process, or
- a student experiences a distressing circumstance and they, for good reason, do not inform the school by the deadline for submission, in which case it may be considered as an extenuating circumstance or a retrospective extension is granted – depending on the academic requirement to complete the coursework and the ability of the student to complete the coursework within a defined timeframe.

#### Coursework that is set well in advance of the deadline

7.6 For coursework that is determined by a programme to be set well in advance of the deadline, a student may present a request for an extension using the designated University extensions request form. The request must be submitted to the school in which the unit resides before the coursework submission deadline.

7.7 Deadlines are set such that students, in planning their work, are expected to be able to work around or factor in the potential for short disruptions to their study. An extension will not normally be permitted, therefore, to account for 'acute' circumstances where 'acute' means a student unexpectedly experiences and is impacted by a circumstance or event of a short duration, unless it can be shown and evidenced that the acute circumstance has had a significant and disproportionate effect on the ability of the student to submit the coursework by the deadline.

7.8 Evidence of the circumstance must be provided, unless in exceptional cases. Students may refer to previously submitted evidence of chronic conditions or persistent circumstances where it is relevant to the reason for the extension request. Evidence need not be presented at the time of submission but must be provided within a specified timeframe; otherwise the submission will be treated as late. Evidence may take various forms; but must be independent and sufficiently detailed to support the narrative provided by the student. Where an illness has not or cannot be observed by a doctor, a medical note is not sufficient evidence of the impact of the circumstance.

7.9 Schools will consider the request and provide a response to the student, before the original submission date where that is practicable. Schools should have in place a role or team that is responsible for considering requests; this role will normally be undertaken by the school office, in consultation with academic members of staff.

7.10 Extensions of up to seven days may be granted to ensure that a student's learning is not held up; however, where a circumstance has had a serious impact upon a student, then a longer extension of up to 21 days may be agreed.

7.11 Students studying on a part-time basis may be permitted an extension of more than 21 days where that does not hold up their learning. Otherwise, where a circumstance demands an extension beyond 21 days, consideration should be given to a suspension of studies or permitting the student to attempt the assessment without penalty at a later date.

#### Coursework that is not set well in advance of the deadline

7.12 For coursework where there is a relatively short period of time between it being set and the deadline, the process for reporting and considering circumstances that affect

the submission of this coursework will be at the discretion of an individual school. Any such process should be made clear to the relevant students.

7.13 No evidence is required, but schools reserve the right to request evidence in exceptional cases or where multiple extensions are being or have been requested.

### **Examinations**

7.14 Students who are unable to attend a summative examination/s must inform the school of their non-attendance as soon as possible and before the start of the exam.

7.15 Where the absence is due to illness a student should either:

- i. if providing evidence of the illness, complete the University's extenuating circumstances form (available from [www.bristol.ac.uk/students/services/forms/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/services/forms/)) and submit it along with medical certification to the relevant school office;
- ii. if self-certifying the illness (i.e. not providing medical evidence), complete the University's self-certification for absence form (available from [www.bristol.ac.uk/students/services/forms/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/services/forms/)) and submit it to the relevant school office. A self-certification of absence from an examination only covers one day in the examination period; students should contact the school and complete the necessary form for each day in which they are absent from examination/s. (see 19.25 for further information on the consequences of self-certification). An accepted extenuating circumstance may supersede a self-certificated absence from an examination by a student where the circumstance relates to the reason for the original absence and covers the same time period.

7.16 Where the absence is due to a reason other than illness, the student should complete the University's extenuating circumstances form and submit it along with any appropriate evidence to the relevant school office.

7.17 Students who start but are unable to complete a summative examination due to illness must inform the examination invigilator before leaving the examination and, if they require medical attention, attending an appointment with a medical practitioner. A completed extenuating circumstances form, supported by evidence, must subsequently be submitted to the relevant school office.

7.18 For further information on the process for notifying the University of any Extenuating Circumstances during the examination period, see section 19.

7.19 Students should also ensure they meet any school or programme requirements concerning notification of absence.

7.20 The information provided in the forms will be held by the University and processed by staff in schools and Faculty Offices in order to keep a record of student absence. Schools will monitor the frequency of individual absence and may request that the student provides medical certification in multiple and sustained instances of self-certified illness. Information will be recorded and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

7.21 The completed form should be submitted by the student to their school, as follows:

- i. A self-certification for absence form - within TWO working days of the end of the period of absence
- ii. An extension to the deadline for submission of coursework – normally prior to the original submission deadline, although evidence may be presented at a later date, as determined by the school.

- iii. An extenuating circumstances form – within TWO working days of the end of the period of absence if the absence is over seven consecutive days, otherwise if the circumstance relates to an assessment, the form should be submitted as soon as possible, but before the meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners.

## 8. Suspension of Study

- 8.1 Suspension of studies is defined as the formal introduction of a pause in a student's studies during which they are not required to engage with their studies.
- 8.2 On resumption of their studies, students are expected to fulfil the same progression criteria as if they had not suspended their studies.
- 8.3 This policy does not relate to any suspension instigated or mandated by the University due to misconduct, which is covered in the University's Student Disciplinary Rules and Regulations, or due to a mental health difficulty, which is covered by the University's Policy on Fitness to Study.
- 8.4 Students do not have the automatic right to suspend their studies. The University expects students to normally complete their study in a single continuous period. As a suspension of study will interrupt a student's progress on their programme, it will only be granted where there are good grounds and supporting documentation (e.g. a report from a registered medical practitioner).

### *Grounds for suspension*

- 8.5 A suspension may be granted on the grounds that the student is unable to engage effectively with their studies owing to external factors such as serious and persistent health problems, disability, bereavement or additional sole caring responsibilities, serious financial problems, mandatory military service, or where a part-time student's employment pattern has changed.
- 8.6 A suspension may also be granted if it is demonstrated by the student that it would genuinely be in their best academic interests to suspend studies, for example in order to take up employment or other activities that will contribute to their academic development or where the student is transferring to another programme.

### *Request for a suspension*

- 8.7 Each request for suspension of study must be considered individually taking into account the particular circumstances of the student.
- 8.8 Suspension must be for a defined period. The length of the period of suspension granted should match, as closely as possible, the time required by the circumstances that necessitate the suspension. The student's period of study for the programme on which they are registered, as set out in 24.14 and 34.6, is paused whilst they are suspended and recommences on their return to study.
- 8.9 A period or periods of suspension should total no more than 12 months throughout a programme of study unless a specific extension to the period of suspension has been agreed (see 8.23).
- 8.10 Suspensions cannot be backdated by more than one month from the date of the request for suspension of studies.
- 8.11 A request for a suspension of study must be made by the student or their proxy. The student should notify the School of their intention and submit a completed form (generated by the School Office), accompanied by any relevant supporting documents (medical evidence or correspondence as appropriate).

- 8.12 In cases where the accompanying documentation are not comprehensive enough to determine the best course of action for a student, schools may request and consider supporting evidence from medical, counselling or other relevant services before agreeing to recommend a suspension of registration. When doing this, Schools must consider what is reasonable with respect to a student's particular circumstances.
- 8.13 There may be additional rules on suspensions from a funding body. It is the responsibility of the student to confirm that arrangements and approval for the suspension have been secured with any funding sponsor that is involved. Postgraduate students in receipt of a studentship should note that Research Council or UoB studentship funding will cease during a period of suspension.
- 8.14 Any change to student status, such as a suspension of study, will affect immigration status in the UK. The University is required to report any changes in status to the Home Office. Student Visa Services provides guidance and advice to visa-holding students who are seeking a suspension of study. Please see the website for further information: [www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/).

- 8.15 The completed form will be considered by the relevant faculty education director for approval; any difficulties with the student's progression that the School might foresee should be reported.
- 8.16 The criteria for a return from suspension of studies and any change in the status of the student, through transfer to another programme for example, must be set out and agreed by relevant parties (the student, the school and a representative of the faculty) at the point of suspension and the agreement formally recorded and sent to the student. If circumstances change during the period of suspension then it may be appropriate for the criteria to be revisited, in consultation with the relevant parties.

- 8.17 The Faculty will write to the student notifying them of the suspension of study and any conditions that need to be fulfilled for return.

#### *Return from suspension*

- 8.18 The support arrangements, and the associated responsibilities of the student and the school, should be agreed by the relevant parties prior to the student's return such that they are able to engage with and meet the requirements of the programme.
- 8.19 Faculties may require an accompanying translation where the medical certificate is provided in a language other than English or specify the medical practitioner who should assess the student.
- 8.20 Schools should make suitable arrangements to accommodate the student if there have been significant changes to the programme during the period of suspension that will enable the student to complete their studies.
- 8.21 If a student is unable to return on the agreed date, they may seek further approval to extend their period of suspension (see 8.23).
- 8.22 A student for whom the agreed period of suspension becomes insufficient should withdraw from the programme and, should they wish, reapply at a later date, requesting that the existing credit points are recognised as prior learning (section 5).

#### *Extension to a period of suspension*

- 8.23 An extension of up to 12 months to the period of suspension may be granted in exceptional circumstances.

- 8.24 Good grounds for an extension to a period of suspension may include: serious and persistent health problems, disability, significant bereavement or additional sole

caring responsibilities, serious financial problems, mandatory military service or where a part-time student's employment pattern has changed.

- 8.25 Requests should be made on the relevant form and be accompanied by any supporting documents, such as medical evidence or correspondence.
- 8.26 If applicable, the school should forward written support for the extension to the relevant education director to agree.

8.27 Extensions to a period of suspension beyond the 12 months in a programme also require the approval of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education).

## 9. Supplementary Year

- 9.1 The Supplementary Year is an additional year of study within a programme that is provided for eligible students to enable them to meet the criteria for progression whereas otherwise they are not able to progress to the next year or component. The Year may be taken on an 'assessment-only' basis where the teaching has already been received, at the discretion of the relevant board of examiners.
- 9.2 A Faculty Board of Examiners may permit a student to undertake the Supplementary Year if a student does not have sufficient credit points to allow him or her to progress, because of:
- Academic failure: if a student fails a unit and the subsequent re-sit (of up to 20 credit points in an undergraduate modular programme and 30 credit points in a taught postgraduate modular programme), they may be permitted a final opportunity for re-assessment. A student is only permitted to take a supplementary year for this reason once during their programme of study.
  - Extenuating circumstances: if a student's ability to fulfil the criteria for the award of credit points has been affected by medical or other circumstances, they may be permitted to re-attempt the relevant units without penalty.
- 9.3 The Supplementary Year is available in modular undergraduate programmes, but not in non-modular professional programmes. It is also available in taught postgraduate programmes where there are extenuating circumstances, but only exceptionally because of academic failure.
- 9.4 In cases of (a): students who are placed on a supplementary year are required to undertake the units they have failed or a replacement unit from their programme structure and any additional units appropriate to the programme of study, as determined by the faculty. Marks for units that contribute to the final programme mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark. Where it is necessary for a student to undertake additional units, they will be required to engage with the teaching and learning of the unit/s. A student is not required to pass additional units for the purposes of progression but may undertake the assessment and obtain the credit for the unit. Where this is the case the credit and mark will not count towards the student's programme of study.
- 9.5 In cases of (b): students who are placed on a supplementary year due to extenuating circumstances will undertake the affected units as determined by the Faculty Board of Examiners. Marks will be awarded as normal (i.e. not capped if first attempt).
- 9.6 For students holding a Tier 4 visa who need to re-take a limited number of units during a supplementary year, in order to retain their visa, the student must be taking at least one unit in each teaching block, and that unit must be:
- the unit that was previously failed; or



- if that unit is no longer offered, an appropriate replacement unit for the original unit.

9.7 A student will normally only be able to take a supplementary year due to extenuating circumstances once during their programme of study. Exceptionally, where a student experiences significant extenuating circumstances on two separate occasions such that they are unable to complete one or more academic years during their programme and therefore exceed the maximum period of study, a request to extend the period of study for an individual student should be made by the student, via the School and Faculty, to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education).

Tier 4 students registered on a four-year Integrated Masters Degree in most circumstances cannot undertake a second supplementary year due to UK Immigration Rules' application of a five-year study cap to Tier 4 study in the UK. Please contact the Student Visa Services Team to determine whether a student may be eligible. Additionally, Tier 4 students registered on a five-year Integrated Masters degree (e.g. with a Year Abroad/ in Industry) cannot undertake a supplementary year in any circumstance due to the same restriction on the visa.

- 9.8 It is the faculty's discretion to determine whether the student is required to engage with the content of the whole unit or a particular component of the unit.
- 9.9 Students undertaking the supplementary year are expected to be in regular contact with the faculty / school / department, attend certain components of the unit and fulfil any specific attendance requirements as determined by the faculty.
- 9.10 An appropriate fee will normally be charged for the supplementary year (including repeat years), see: [www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding/), except in 'severe' exceptional circumstances, as defined by the University.
- 9.11 Sponsored tier 4 international students are subject to attendance monitoring requirements throughout the whole year on a monthly basis and will be expected to be in regular contact with the faculty / school / department, such that the University's reporting responsibilities can be fulfilled.
- 9.12 In exceptional circumstances, the Faculty Board of Examiners may allow a student to be registered on the supplementary year and the unit/s they have failed but to engage with the content of the failed units and with their academic personal tutor from home. See: [www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding/) for information on applicable fees.

## **FORMS AND CONDUCT OF ASSESSMENT AND THE PROVISION OF FEEDBACK**

The University has established a series of institutional principles for assessment and feedback in taught programmes. The principles are a statement of the University's approach to assessment and the provision of feedback such that both staff and students share common expectations and are aware of their responsibilities. They are available at: [www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/assessment-and-feedback-principles/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/assessment-and-feedback-principles/).

### **10. Forms of Assessment**

- 10.1 The assessment methods that might be expected in taught programmes are provided at: [www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/annex/annex-formsofassessment.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/annex/annex-formsofassessment.html).
- 10.2 A programme need not employ all the forms of assessment but the range should be sufficient to enable the full spectrum of knowledge and skills (both subject specific and generic) embodied in the programme and unit intended learning outcomes, to be appropriately assessed individually or cumulatively.
- 10.3 In assessing a unit composed of more than one component, it is the unit as a whole, not each component that needs to be satisfactorily completed, except where it has been designated as 'must-pass'. Components need not be capable of being separately assessed, although programmes may require a component to be satisfactorily completed in order for a unit to be passed and enable the credit points to be awarded.
- 10.4 All assessment should be undertaken in the language in which the material from the unit is taught, unless there is a clear academic rationale for doing otherwise. Where this is the case, the rationale must be approved as part of the normal programme and unit approval process and students informed prior to or on the commencement of their studies. Students may not request assessment to be conducted in an alternative language other than as allowed by this clause.

#### ***Assuring assessment criteria and intended learning outcomes at unit level***

- 10.5 Faculties are responsible for ensuring that students are given clear guidance on the assessment requirements of their programmes, whilst Schools are responsible for this at the unit level.
- 10.6 Unit specifications must provide sufficient information about the assessment in relation to the intended learning outcomes.
- 10.7 Any significant changes to a unit, at whatever level it is approved, should automatically trigger a review of whether the assessment methods and criteria remain congruent with the unit's intended learning outcomes.
- 10.8 Annual review mechanisms for units (annual unit or programme reviews) must provide appropriate opportunities for evaluating whether the assessments test the stated unit objectives/learning outcomes.

#### ***Academic scrutiny of assessment***

- 10.9 The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that procedures are in place to assure the quality and standards of assessment. These procedures are normally implemented by one or more School Examinations Officer(s) (see section 22).
- 10.10 All summative assessment tasks and marking schemes should normally be subject to review by a second person, except in cases where the assessment accounts for the equivalent of 25 percent or less of the overall mark in a 20 credit point unit (e.g. 50 percent in a 10 credit point unit).

- 10.11 External examiners should be asked to scrutinise all examination papers and any summative assessment tasks that accounts to the equivalent of more than 25 percent of the overall mark in a 20 credit point unit and contributes to the final degree result. To facilitate this, external examiners should have access to the relevant information relating to aims and objectives, contents, intended learning outcomes, assessment methods, marking criteria and any model answers.

## 11. Conduct of Assessment

### **Formal unseen written examinations**

- 11.1 The procedures under which the University requires unseen written examinations to be conducted are set out in the University's Examination Regulations (annex 3). Should any divergence from these procedures be requested, the chair of the relevant School Board of Examiners must be consulted. The chair may act on behalf of the board but must first consult the undergraduate or graduate Faculty Education Director.
- 11.2 The University's Examination Regulations contain detailed provisions concerning the handling of allegations of plagiarism, cheating and other examinations offences (sections 2.9 -11.18). Anyone with responsibility for handling such allegations must be fully familiar with these regulations.

### *The examination periods*

- 11.3 Summative examinations are set within the January and May/June assessment periods and 're-sit' examinations in the August/September period, unless being taken as a supplementary assessment. Exceptions must be agreed as in 11.5.
- 11.4 The summative assessment of units must take place during or at the end of the teaching block in which the unit is run, except for agreed exceptions.
- 11.5 Where there is good academic reason to request an exemption from 11.3 or 11.4, the programme director must make a case to the relevant Faculty Education Director. If the Faculty Education Director approves the case, it must then be presented to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education Quality and Standards) for final approval.
- 11.6 Examinations within the MBChB, BDS, BVSc (including Accelerated Graduate Entry) and other specified non-modular programmes should be arranged as outlined in 11.3 and 11.4 as far as is possible.

### *Students requesting to take summative examinations outside of the United Kingdom*

#### Students registered for an award of the University of Bristol

- 11.7 All University of Bristol students taking first-sit or re-sit examinations are expected to take their scheduled examinations in venues arranged by the University of Bristol. In exceptional cases, however, approval may be sought for permission to take an examination at an approved institution outside the United Kingdom (UK).
- 11.8 There is no automatic entitlement to sit an examination outside the UK. Permission to do so will only be given if:
- (i) It is permitted by programme and/or faculty requirements (e.g. 11.9);
  - (ii) The student has provided sufficient cause or reason\* to not sit the examination at the University of Bristol;
  - (iii) The arrangements for examination at the approved institution conform to University regulations;
  - (iv) There is not suitable alternative.

This judgement is at the discretion of the relevant Faculty Education Director.

\* Holidays, working commitments or financial constraints at the time of the examination will not normally be considered a sufficient cause or reason for taking the examination outside the UK. Authorisation to sit an examination outside the UK on medical grounds will not normally be granted as students should only be taking examinations when fit to do so. Students who have medical issues should seek advice from their School.

- 11.9 Students on the MBChB, BDS and BVSc programmes are prohibited from taking examinations outside the UK, due to a requirement from professional accrediting bodies.
- 11.10 Any examination scheduled outside the UK must take place in an institution where the conditions for examination have been formally agreed by the University. The relevant Faculty will notify the University's Examinations Office in such instances, which will liaise with the student's home institution with regard to the arrangements for the examination such that it is convened in accordance with the regulations of the University of Bristol.
- 11.11 Any examination arranged outside of the UK must be scheduled to run concurrently or to overlap with same examination at the University of Bristol.
- 11.12 The same procedures apply where the requirements of a distance learning programme necessitate students taking their written summative examinations outside the UK. Consideration should be given during the design stage of distance learning programmes as to whether alternative forms of assessment are more appropriate.

#### Students whose award is not made by the University of Bristol

- 11.13 A student studying at the University of Bristol, but whose award is not being made by the University (i.e. on a 'Study Abroad' period), will be permitted the opportunity to undertake a first-attempt summative examination at their home institution, where the student is required to re-engage with their studies at the home institution at the same time that examinations are scheduled at Bristol (i.e. in the January examination period). This allowance is subject to:
- (i) It being permitted by programme requirements;
  - (ii) The arrangements for examination conforming to University regulation, including that it is held concurrently with the examination held in Bristol or, where this is not possible, on the same day.

This judgement is at the discretion of the relevant Faculty Education Director.

- 11.14 In such cases, at the behest of the student, the International Office will inform the relevant School and Faculty in which the Study Abroad student is based at the start of each academic year.
- 11.15 The relevant Faculty will subsequently notify the University's Examinations Office, which will liaise with the student's home institution with regard to the arrangements for the examination such that it is convened in accordance with the regulations of the University of Bristol.

#### ***Coursework and similar forms of written summative assessment***

Coursework is defined as any summative assessment based on essays, assignments, creative writing or other tasks that is completed outside timetabled classes in the students' own time.

- 11.16 Students should be provided with a clear timetable at the start of the unit (or year of study for a programme, if appropriate) as to when coursework will be set, when it should be submitted and when they will receive feedback on it. Students should be given a reasonable amount of time for planning, writing and reviewing their work before the submission date, relative to the learning on the unit and their overall workload for the programme. Within this, coursework should be set at the commencement of the unit, unless there is good academic reason otherwise.
- 11.17 A reference to how a student should apply for an extension to the original deadline and the penalties for late submission should be provided in the relevant student handbook (see section 17).
- 11.18 Academic misconduct associated with continuously assessed summative assignments should be dealt with in accordance with the Examination Regulations.
- 11.19 External examiner(s) should be supplied with the summative assessment structure for a programme in which the examination and coursework requirements are defined. External examiner(s) must be able to scrutinise examples of summative coursework.
- 11.20 The director of a unit that utilises coursework as an assessment method is responsible for ensuring that all those involved in the assessment process are aware of the assessments of the unit, and where the marking of coursework is undertaken by more than one person, procedures must be in place to ensure consistency in marking.

#### *e-Submission of coursework*

Procedural guidance on the e-submission of coursework is available from:

[www.bris.ac.uk/digital-education/support/tools/e-submission/](http://www.bris.ac.uk/digital-education/support/tools/e-submission/).

- 11.21 Where employed, the e-submission of work should be consistently applied for all students undertaking the assessment and, ideally, to all the appropriate assessments within the unit.
- 11.22 It should be made clear to students (e.g. via Blackboard) that, for each unit, whether any assessment can or must be submitted online and if the work is to be checked using text, code or other matching software.
- 11.23 Students should be given clear instructions (e.g. via Blackboard) on the submission process, for each unit, including that:
- i. Submitted files must be in the specified file format(s) (e.g. Word, pdf).
  - ii. Submitted files must comply with instructions, including required file naming and coversheet information (if used).
  - iii. The deadline relates to the complete and successful submission of the coursework and students must ensure that they begin the submission process in good time before the deadline.
  - iv. Checking the successful submission of the work is the responsibility of the student. Staff should only be contacted if the student has identified or experienced a problem (e.g. submitted the wrong file).
- 11.24 In the event that University systems are not accessible on the deadline date/time, the submission deadline should be extended, and students informed. Students should not use alternative methods to submit work e.g. email.
- 11.25 If a student encounters a problem preventing them from submitting their work that is not caused by a University system failure, they must notify their School immediately.

Evidence of this technical failure may be required by the School. The act of notification in itself does not annul or extend any deadline.

### ***Online assessment***

- 11.26 Arrangements should be made for responding to unexpected technical problems in a way that is fair and efficient and within a reasonable timeframe. This includes technical support in case of server failure. In cases of serious technical failure, students should be offered the examination in paper format.
- 11.27 Suitable arrangements should be made in conjunction with the University's central IT Services for the invigilation of online assessment.
- 11.28 The summative assessment should only be accessible by secure password and the performance recorded by university-approved secure management tools suited for the purpose.
- 11.29 Computers used for summative assessments should wherever possible have both internet and communication tools disabled, except as needed for the purpose of the assessment.
- 11.30 The use of a large pool or sub-pools of examination questions from which a randomised sub-set of questions is generated to produce individualised student exams is strongly encouraged as long as the pool/s cover/s all aspects of the examinable material and the sub-sample generated is representative. Pools of questions should be carefully constructed to test the unit's intended learning outcomes.
- 11.31 Information Services is responsible for the technical infrastructure which enables the assessment to occur.
- 11.32 Schools must ensure that the scheduling of online assessment does not conflict with the central examinations timetable.
- 11.33 Online assessment must be conducted under the same processes specified by the Code as for other forms of assessment.

### ***Oral examinations of individual students***

- 11.34 Two examiners should be present during all oral examinations. If this is not possible then a procedure for recording the event must be in place.
- 11.35 Oral examinations should only be used when it matches the intended learning outcome being tested e.g. practical or performance skills. Normally this would not include assessment of simple factual knowledge recall.
- 11.36 It is the responsibility of the Programme Director in conjunction with the Unit Directors involved to demonstrate that the oral examination is reliable, fair and appropriate and adds value to the assessment portfolio.
- 11.37 The external examiner must have adequate access to the purpose, objectives and assessment criteria.
- 11.38 If an oral examination is part of the assessment of a unit, it must apply to every student taking that unit.
- 11.39 An oral examination is not permitted as a means of moderating a student's examination result or degree classification.

## 12. Reasonable adjustment to assessment because of disability or other reason

- *Guidance for schools working with disabled students, including implementing a Disability Support Summary (DSS), is available at: [www.bris.ac.uk/disability-services/documents/dssguide.pdf](http://www.bris.ac.uk/disability-services/documents/dssguide.pdf).*
  - *Please also see 'University policy on supporting disabled students' (Annex 6).*
  - *The University's policy on Fitness to Study is available at: [www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/secretary/documents/student-rules-and-regs/fitness-to-study-policy.pdf](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/secretary/documents/student-rules-and-regs/fitness-to-study-policy.pdf).*
- 12.1 Disability is a protected characteristic that is protected under the Equality Act 2010. Schools should have procedures in place that anticipate the support needs of students with a disability. A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- 12.2 The University has a legal obligation to make a reasonable adjustment where a provision, criterion or practice, including those for the consideration of extenuating circumstances, places disabled students at a substantial disadvantage. The duty of making a reasonable adjustment for the effects of a disability may require relaxing or setting aside the provisions of the Regulations and Code of Practice both directly with respect to the effects of the disability, and indirectly through the capacity of the student to follow its requirements in other matters. The purpose of the duty is not to confer an unfair advantage on disabled students but to remove barriers where it is reasonable to do so, such that disabled students have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning
- 12.3 The duty to make reasonable adjustments to assessment is anticipatory. The University should not wait until an individual student discloses a disability or until adjustments are requested. Instead, likely solutions to predictable difficulties should be prepared in advance such that disabled students are not substantially disadvantaged.
- 12.4 Further information about the University's legal obligations as to reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act is provided in the University's Policy on Supporting Disabled Students.

### ***Disclosure of a disability***

- 12.5 Schools must ensure there are mechanisms by which students are able to disclose a disability throughout their programme of study.
- 12.6 Any student who discloses a disability such that additional support may be required, should be signposted to Disability Services. A disabled student is not obliged to contact or use Disability Services; in these cases, schools still have a responsibility to make anticipatory and reasonable adjustments and can seek advice from Disability Services. Programme and unit directors are encouraged to consider the accessibility of assessments on an on-going basis.
- 12.7 Where a disability is not disclosed prior to the assessment, examiners are not obliged to retrospectively consider the effect of a disability on a student's performance.

### ***Disability support summary***

- 12.8 When a student does contact Disability Services, and there is evidence of a disability, Disability Services will draft a 'Disability Support Summary' (DSS). The DSS is devised in consultation with the student. Where the support required is complex, new or unusual, the student's Faculty/ School will also be consulted. The DSS will state

what support the student requires, including adjustments to assessment where appropriate.

### **Competence standards**

- 12.9 A competence standard is defined within the Equality Act 2010 as: ‘the academic, medical or other standard(s) applied for the purpose of determining whether a person has a particular level of competence or ability’. It therefore may not be possible to make reasonable adjustments to aspects of some assessments because they constitute a competence standard.
- 12.10 Schools and Faculties must ensure that competence standards are ‘genuine’. Competence standards should be the subject of regular review to ensure they remain genuine.
- 12.11 Some programmes include mandatory requirements, often but not exclusively, related to the need to demonstrate certain knowledge, skills and competencies required by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies. These may require students to undertake study and assessments on days associated with religious observance.
- 12.12 Where competence standards do not apply, Schools must be prepared to implement reasonable adjustments to assessment such that students with disabilities are not disadvantaged.

### **Applying reasonable adjustments**

- 12.13 Disability Services is responsible for securing agreement about the reasonable adjustments that are made for each student, considering representations from the School/Faculty on matters of academic integrity, academic judgement and discipline-specific requirements or constraints and from Education Services relating to implementation.
- 12.14 Where a student requires an adjustment to their assessment and either does not have a DSS or it is not specified in the DSS, they should complete and submit an Alternative Examination Arrangements (AEA) form at the earliest opportunity and before the stipulated deadlines such that a DSS can be created or amended. Students must be made aware that if their application for AEAs is not submitted before the deadline, this may affect the decision in terms of what it considers reasonable and practicable to arrange within the time available.

### **Extenuating circumstances**

- 12.15 Where a student has a Disability Support Summary, the nature of the disability has not changed since the Summary was drawn up, and the provisions of that Summary have been carried out, a Board of Examiners will not normally treat the effects of a disability on an assessment as an ‘extenuating circumstance’ since a reasonable adjustment to the assessment will have already been made.
- 12.16 Students should only report adverse effects of their disability on their study or assessment where any adjustments in the Disability Support Summary are either not yet in place or are not sufficient. Any effects should be reported using the University’s extenuating circumstances form.

### **Reasonable adjustment to assessment because of any other protected characteristic**

- 12.17 Schools should consider making adjustments for students because of any other protected characteristic<sup>1</sup> or their association with someone who has a protected

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<sup>1</sup> The protected characteristics for higher education are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. More information on the protected characteristics can be accessed at: <https://www.bris.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/secure/act/>.



characteristic. In relation to assessment, this could mean that a student will request an alternative assessment date due to their role as a carer of a disabled dependent.

### **Religious observances**

- 12.18 Where it is practicable, reasonable and fair to all students, assessment tasks should be designed to accommodate the religious observances of the students and staff involved. The Examinations Office and schools should work together, with advice from the Multi-faith Chaplaincy when necessary, to try to ensure, as far as it is practicable so to do, that the examination timetable does not conflict with the observance of religious festivals and other holy days.
- 12.19 It is the responsibility of the student to inform the faculty office about their religious beliefs where there is potential for conflict with the setting of assessment. Students should be reminded of their obligations through an appropriate entry in school / programme handbooks

### **Student pregnancy or maternity/paternity**

- 12.20 If it is likely that a student's pregnancy might affect their ability to meet coursework deadlines or sit examinations, consideration must be given to implementing measures to support them in meeting the requirements of the programme, including offering the opportunity to sit the examination in a location separate from other students.
- 12.21 If a student is due to give birth near to, or during assessment deadlines, or the examination period, but they wish to complete assessed work or sit examinations, the student should not be prevented from so doing. If the midwife or doctor, however, advises against sitting an examination or trying to meet the assessed work deadline, an alternative method of assessment should be explored.
- 12.22 Otherwise, the school should make arrangements for the student to sit the examination, as a first attempt, at the earliest possible opportunity or agree to an extension to the deadline for the submission of coursework.
- 12.23 If a student is likely to be absent due to their partner giving birth, and where the due date conflicts with any scheduled assessments, staff should endeavour to offer flexibility wherever practicable so to do. However, in such circumstances automatic dispensation from examinations will not always be possible. This provision also extends to cover same sex couples.

## **13. Feedback to Students**

- 13.1 Each school must set out to its students a clear approach for the delivery of feedback on their work, in accordance with the [Institutional Principles for Assessment and Feedback](#), covering the following points:
- the ways in which students will be able to discuss their work and academic progress with staff;
  - the purpose of the feedback and guidance on how students can make best use of it;
  - the assessment tasks students will receive feedback on, and the form it will take;
  - when students should expect to receive the feedback and how they will be informed if it is not possible to meet the agreed deadline (feedback on work should normally be delivered within 15 working days of the deadline for submission – see the *Framework for the return of feedback to students on their work*:

[www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/assessment-and-feedback-principles/framework-for-feedback/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/assessment-and-feedback-principles/framework-for-feedback/)).

13.2 Guidance on the provision of formative feedback to students is available at:  
[www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/annex/annex-deliveringformativefeedback.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/annex/annex-deliveringformativefeedback.html).

## **MARKING OF ASSESSMENTS AND THE PROCESSING OF MARKS**

### **14. Marking Criteria and Scales**

- 14.1 Marking criteria are designed to help students know what is expected of them. Marking criteria differ from model answers and more prescriptive marking schemes which assign a fixed proportion of the assessment mark to particular knowledge, understanding and/or skills. Annex 1 provides definitions for: marking criteria, marking scheme and model answer.
- 14.2 Where there is more than one marker for a particular assessment task, schools should take steps to ensure consistency of marking. Programme specific assessment criteria must be precise enough to ensure consistency of marking across candidates and markers, compatible with a proper exercise of academic judgement on the part of individual markers.
- 14.3 Markers are encouraged to use pro forma in order to show how they have arrived at their decision. Comments provided on pro forma should help candidates, internal markers and moderators and external examiners to understand why a particular mark has been awarded. Schools should agree, in advance of the assessment, whether internal moderators have access to the pro forma / mark sheets completed by the first marker before or after they mark a candidate's work.
- 14.4 Detailed marking criteria for assessed group work, the assessment of class presentations, and self/peer (student) assessment must be established and made available to students and examiners.
- 14.5 In respect of group work, it is often desirable to award both a group and individual mark, to ensure individuals' contributions to the task are acknowledged. The weighting of the group and individual mark and how the marks are combined should be set out in the unit specification.

#### ***University generic marking criteria***

- 14.6 The common University generic marking criteria, set out in table 1, represent levels of attainment covering levels 4-7 of study. Establishing and applying criteria for assessment at level 8 should be managed by the school that owns the associated programme, in liaison with the faculty.
- 14.7 The common marking criteria are designed to be used for an individual piece of assessed student work. The descriptors give broad comparability of standards by level of study across all programmes as well as level of performance across the University. They reflect the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications but need to be benchmarked against subject specific criteria at the programme level.
- 14.8 Faculties, with their constituent schools, must establish appropriately specific and detailed marking criteria which are congruent with the University-level criteria and, if appropriate, the level of study. All forms of programme-specific marking criteria must be approved by the Faculty.

#### ***Marking scales***

- 14.9 Assessment must be marked using one of the sanctioned marking scales, as follows:
- 0-100 marking scale
  - 0-20 marking scale

A five-point A-E marking scale is only available for programmes in the School of Education.

Any mark on the chosen marking scale can be used.

- 14.10 Schools should utilise the marking scale that is best suited to the form of assessment. This and the marking criteria for the assessment should be established prior to its commencement.

**Exceptions to the sanctioned marking scales**

- 14.11 Neither the 0-20 nor 0-100 point scale is applicable to assessments where marks are not awarded; the student either passes or not. Such assessment may be employed, subject to approval by the faculty, when a student is required to demonstrate a minimum standard of competence for reasons related to professional accreditation requirements.
- 14.12 Highly structured assessments that are scored out of a total number less than 100 may be utilised where each mark can be justified in relation to those marks neighbouring it. In these cases, the mark must be translated onto the 0-100 point scale, mapped against the relevant marking criteria, and students informed of the use of this method in advance of the assessment in the appropriate medium (e.g. on Blackboard).

**Reaching the ‘Unit Mark’ (see also sections 29 and 37)**

- 14.13 Marks gauged on the 0-20 scale should be translated to a point on the 0-100 scale before entry into the VLE to calculate the overall unit mark for the purposes of progression and classification (see table 2).
- 14.14 The 0-20 point scale is a non-linear ordinal scale; for example, a mark on the 0-20 point scale IS NOT equivalent to a percentage arrived at by multiplying the mark by 5. Table 2 provides an equivalence relationship between the scales to enable the aggregation of marks from different assessment events to provide the overall unit mark which will be a percentage. This is illustrated below for a notional unit.

In this example, the MCQ uses all points on the 0-100 scale whereas all the other assessments use the 0-20 point scale.

To achieve the final unit mark each component mark needs to be adjusted as:

	<b>Dissertation (25%)</b>	<b>Unseen written exam (35%)</b>	<b>MCQ (25%)</b>	<b>Oral exam (15%)</b>	<b>Total unit mark out of 100</b>
<b>Actual score</b>	12 on 0-20 scale	8 on 0-20 scale	57 on 0- 100 scale	15 on 0-20 scale	
<b>Adjusted to 0- 100 scale</b>	62/100	48/100	57/100	72/100	
<b>Final weighted mark</b>	62 x 25 = 1550	48 x 35 = 1680	57 x 25 = 1425	72 x 15 = 1080	<b>5735/100 = 57.35 (57)</b>

- 14.15 The overall unit mark must be expressed as a percentage as the University’s degree classification methodology is based on the percentage scale.
- 14.16 The final programme or taught component mark will be calculated by applying the agreed algorithm to the unit marks (see sections 32 and 39).

**TABLE 1: Generic Marking Criteria mapped against the three marking scales**

Grade	0-20 point scale	0-100 point scale	Criteria to be satisfied
A	20 19 18	100 94 89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work would be worthy of dissemination under appropriate conditions.</li> <li>➤ Mastery of advanced methods and techniques at a level beyond that explicitly taught.</li> <li>➤ Ability to synthesise and employ in an original way ideas from across the subject.</li> <li>➤ In group work, there is evidence of an outstanding individual contribution.</li> <li>➤ Excellent presentation.</li> <li>➤ Outstanding command of critical analysis and judgement.</li> </ul>
	17 16 15	83 78 72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Excellent range and depth of attainment of intended learning outcomes.</li> <li>➤ Mastery of a wide range of methods and techniques.</li> <li>➤ Evidence of study and originality clearly beyond the bounds of what has been taught.</li> <li>➤ In group work, there is evidence of an excellent individual contribution.</li> <li>➤ Excellent presentation.</li> <li>➤ Able to display a command of critical analysis and judgement.</li> </ul>
B	14 13 12	68 65 62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Attained all the intended learning outcomes for a unit.</li> <li>➤ Able to use well a range of methods and techniques to come to conclusions.</li> <li>➤ Evidence of study, comprehension, and synthesis beyond the bounds of what has been explicitly taught.</li> <li>➤ Very good presentation of material.</li> <li>➤ Able to employ critical analysis and judgement.</li> <li>➤ Where group work is involved there is evidence of a productive individual contribution.</li> </ul>
C	11 10 9	58 55 52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Some limitations in attainment of learning objectives but has managed to grasp most of them.</li> <li>➤ Able to use most of the methods and techniques taught.</li> <li>➤ Evidence of study and comprehension of what has been taught</li> <li>➤ Adequate presentation of material.</li> <li>➤ Some grasp of issues and concepts underlying the techniques and material taught.</li> <li>➤ Where group work is involved there is evidence of a positive individual contribution.</li> </ul>
D	8 7	48 45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Limited attainment of intended learning outcomes.</li> <li>➤ Able to use a proportion of the basic methods and techniques taught.</li> <li>➤ Evidence of study and comprehension of what has been taught, but grasp insecure.</li> <li>➤ Poorly presented.</li> <li>➤ Some grasp of the issues and concepts underlying the techniques and material taught, but weak and incomplete.</li> </ul>
	6	42	
E	5	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Attainment of only a minority of the learning outcomes.</li> <li>➤ Able to demonstrate a clear but limited use of some of the basic methods and techniques taught.</li> <li>➤ Weak and incomplete grasp of what has been taught.</li> <li>➤ Deficient understanding of the issues and concepts underlying the techniques and material taught.</li> </ul>
	1 - 4	7 - 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Attainment of nearly all the intended learning outcomes deficient.</li> <li>➤ Lack of ability to use at all or the right methods and techniques taught.</li> <li>➤ Inadequately and incoherently presented.</li> <li>➤ Wholly deficient grasp of what has been taught.</li> <li>➤ Lack of understanding of the issues and concepts underlying the techniques and material taught.</li> </ul>
0	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No significant assessable material, absent, or assessment missing a "must pass" component.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 2: Relationship between the three marking scales**

<b>0-20 point scale</b>	<b>A-E scale</b>	<b>Equivalent to these fixed points on the 0-100 point scale</b>
20	A	100
19	A	94
18	A	89
17	A	83
16	A	78
15	A	72
14	B	68
13	B	65
12	B	62
11	C	58
10	C	55
9	C	52
8	D	48
7	D	45
6	E	42
5	E	35
1 to 4	E	7 to 29
0	0	0

## 15. Treatment of Marks

15.1 The University assures the quality of its marking through moderation. Definitions of the terms used in this section can be found in the glossary of terms at annex 1.

15.2 Each programme will have an effective moderation plan in place, which may be organised at a school or faculty level, to ensure that the marking process is robust and treats students fairly, in line with the following expectations. The plan should be advertised and made available to students, for example in the programme handbook.

### *Internal moderation*

15.3 All summative assessments that have a weighting of more than 10% of the unit mark should be subject to internal moderation; exceptions are:

- Where there are particular difficulties in applying moderation given the nature of the assessment. In these cases, evidence of how the assessment mark was reached should be recorded.
- Objective tests, such as multiple-choice questions.
- Where an assessment is subject to double-marking, in which case internal moderation is not required.

15.4 The sample size for moderation should be adequate to provide assurance that the work has been properly marked across a range of student performance in the assessment for each marker. The following procedure is recommended to arrive at a representative sample:

- a. sufficient standard ranges should be established across the marking scale from which the selection is to be made (for example the ranges could consist of fails, third class, 2:1, 2:2, first or the descriptor categories on the 0-20 marking scale);
- b. a sliding scale corresponding to the number of assessments available for moderation should be employed; as a guide, a minimum of eight or 10% of the available assessments, whichever is greater, should be included in the sample. The sliding scale should then be adjusted according to:
  - i. the number of scripts available, so that the sampled proportion reduces as the number of available scripts rises; and
  - ii. the number of first markers for an assessment or component part of an assessment; the higher the number of first markers, the more assessments are moderated (to ensure adequate moderation across all markers).
- c. Where the number of submitted pieces of assessment for the unit is seven or less then all the assessments should be subject to internal moderation.

The internal moderation of assessments that do not generate a numerical grade (i.e. pass/fail assessments) should focus upon those at the pass/fail border.

The marks of assessments that significantly contribute to determining progression within a programme or the award and classification of a qualification (e.g. a dissertation or project) should be carefully reviewed through the moderation process, if they are not double-marked.

15.5 The responsibilities for conducting internal moderation are:

- Moderation is undertaken by an individual or team of academic staff within the subject, as allocated by the designated school representative (i.e. School Education Director or Exams Officer).

- The Unit Director is responsible for ensuring that moderation takes place in their unit in accordance with these expectations.
- The Programme Director is responsible for having an overview of moderation across the programme.
- The final decision on marks rests with the boards of examiners, taking account of the view of the external examiner(s).

15.6 Moderation should take place after the assessment has been marked and in advance of submission to the exam board, with reference to the University's [policy on providing feedback to students on their work](#). Where necessary, priority should be given to the timely release of feedback over the completion of the moderation process. In such cases, students should be informed of the status of the mark that has been released.

15.7 The role of the moderator is to form a view of the overall marking, not apply corrective marking to individual assessments. The moderator should produce a report, which should instigate a dialogue between the marker and moderator; the conclusions of which should be formally captured as part of an audit trail. The purpose of the audit trail is to provide the relevant examination boards, including the external examiner with a means to determine whether the marks are fairly awarded and are consistent with relevant academic standards and as evidence in the event of an appeal.

15.8 Moderators should review the marking of the individual marker/s against the relevant marking criteria within the sample and all the marks awarded to identify whether the marks awarded appropriately reflect the standard of work and whether there are any inconsistencies within the marking. A separate process should be in place to check that all questions in an assessment has been marked and that the marks are totalled correctly.

15.9 Specific outcomes arising from the moderation process are:

- Moderator confirms marks.
- An entire set of marks is adjusted in relation to the marking criteria and the mark distribution.
- A sub-set of marks is adjusted to rectify a perceived inconsistency within the marks profile and/or between markers.
- The whole or sub-set of assessments are re-marked because the inconsistencies cannot be rectified in a simple manner.

'Mark adjustment', as an outcome of moderation, is a legitimate and intended means of ensuring that marks are robust and fair. An adjustment may apply to an entire set of assessments or an identified sub-set. Adjustments should not be made to individual marks in isolation.

15.10 In cases where a moderator and marker cannot agree on a course of action, the batch of work should be referred to a second internal moderator (as identified by the School Education Director) for adjudication.

15.11 The relevant school board of examiners should be assured that moderation has occurred and action has been taken to assure the quality and standards of the marks presented to it.

15.12 Evidence of moderation should be made available to the external examiner for review, which may consist of samples of moderated assessment, a distribution of unit marks and the formal record of dialogue between markers and moderators. Internal



examiners should consider and respond to any issues raised by the external examiner prior to the exam board wherever possible.

- 15.13 The School should review the operation of its policy on internal moderation for its programmes on an annual basis. The University Quality Team will investigate moderation practices and their implementation where there is cause for concern (e.g. if it is raised by an external examiner in their report).
- 15.14 Where coursework is assessed summatively, schools should have a system in place to ensure students' work is available for moderation at a later date, by a means that ensures that the marked work is identical to that originally submitted.
- 15.15 All work assessed for summative purposes should be capable of being independently moderated and made available in case it needs to be moderated by the external examiner(s).

### **Marking**

- 15.16 Each faculty should ensure that its schools have clear marking and verification procedures, so that students are treated fairly and consistently across the University.

- 15.17 If a school is prepared to offer a candidate, who has produced an illegible script, the opportunity to dictate or transcribe it, in accordance with the Examination Regulations (2.8) at annex 3, the following procedure must be followed:

*A school may invite a candidate to transcribe or dictate an illegible script. Any transcription or dictation must be verbatim, and the student should be asked to sign the transcript to confirm that it is a true copy of the original script. The transcription or dictation will be treated as part of the formal examination process. Schools may also invite the student to undertake an oral examination.*

- 15.18 The less prescriptive the assessment (i.e. the lower the expectation of conformity to a model answer), the more necessary it is to ensure an effective moderation strategy. The types of moderation and how they may or may not be applied for assessments within the University of Bristol are outlined below.

- 15.19 Scaling is not normally permitted, except in the following two circumstances:

- a) Where the raw scores for the whole cohort are converted onto an appropriately distributed marking scale as part of the planned design of the assessment. The rationale and mechanism for scaling should be recorded in the unit specification and in the minutes of the relevant board of examiners.
- b) Where the marks of a cohort of students are moderated *post hoc* due to an unintended distribution of marks. When an assessment or a question within an assessment has not performed as intended, scaling may be employed (in this instance the methodology will not have been planned beforehand). This should be an exceptional event. The rationale and mechanism for intended scaling should be recorded in the minutes of the school and faculty boards of examiners.

- 15.20 Before scaling is used, its use and the method that is intended to be employed must be agreed with the relevant Chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners, prior to application, and then approved by the relevant external examiners and the school and faculty boards of examiners.

- 15.21 The use of scaling must also be made transparent to students: in the case of (a), students must be informed of the way in which the raw scores are converted onto the marking scale prior to the assessment; whilst in the case of (b) students must be informed of the process after the assessment.

- 15.22 **Norm-Referencing** (as defined in annex 1) is not permitted as a means of assessment in the University of Bristol. Criterion-referenced assessment (e.g. marking schemes, marking criteria) is to be used for all assessments.
- 15.23 **Negative Marking** may be employed in subjects where it is essential that the student should not guess the right answer. If negative marking is employed, this must be with the full knowledge of the student. There must be appropriate rubric, explaining that the assessment will be subject to negative marking on the cover of an examination paper, and the students should be given opportunities to practise such assessments before undertaking a summative assessment marked in this way.
- 15.24 Schools may choose to adopt double-marking as academically desirable in the case of summative assessment (see annex 1 for a definition of double marking).
- 15.25 It is recognised that there are particular difficulties in providing the second marking/moderation in some forms of assessment such as a class presentation which contribute to the overall unit mark. In these cases, evidence of how the assessment mark was reached should be preserved for moderation.

## 16. Anonymity

- 16.1 'Anonymity' is defined as the use of an identifier, which cannot be related to a student's name without reference to a central register or other mechanism, in the assessment process. An identifier is adopted in order to: avoid unconscious and conscious bias in marking, respect student confidentiality, and ensure fairness when progression and award decisions are made; however, it does not necessarily mean that it is impossible for a member of staff to uncover the identity of a particular student.
- 16.2 Members of staff must respect anonymity where it is employed and not identify, or seek to identify, students unless it is a requirement of their role or there is a clear benefit to the student in doing so e.g. the provision of specific feedback to the student, the correct treatment of extenuating circumstances.
- 16.3 Where students might be identifiable e.g. because they are part of a very small cohort or they have an unusual pattern of study, anonymity must be respected as for any other student.
- 16.4 Schools are responsible for informing students of how they should identify their work.
- 16.5 It is the responsibility of students to employ the anonymity mechanisms provided to them.
- 16.6 Decisions with respect to the preservation of anonymity should be taken by the chair of the relevant examination board.

### *The marking of credit-bearing 'summative' assessment of learning*

- 16.7 All summative assessment should be anonymous when it is marked where that is possible and practicable (e.g. not for viva voce examinations such as interviews and presentations), and consistent with the assessment and its objectives.
- 16.8 The marks awarded for summative assessments should be released individually to students.
- 16.9 Specific moderation techniques must be used for non-anonymous summative assessments e.g. multiple markers.

### *The marking of non-credit-bearing 'formative' assessment for learning*

- 16.10 When designing formative assessment, priority should be given to the educational benefits of the assessment rather than anonymity, for example it should not interfere

with the provision of feedback to students.

- 16.11 While anonymity is not required for formative assessment, it should still be preserved where that is possible, practicable, and consistent with the assessment and its objectives.

#### *Boards of examiners*

- 16.12 Anonymity must be preserved insofar as is practicable when marks are considered at boards of examiners.
- 16.13 Academic information with respect to extenuating circumstances (e.g. which assessments have been affected, the period of time affected by the circumstances, nature of the effect of the circumstances upon study) may be introduced in examination boards where that would be to a student's advantage.
- 16.14 In exceptional cases, information about extenuating circumstances themselves may only be introduced in the Faculty Examination Board and only when all the following conditions are fulfilled: it is to the student's advantage; it is essential for a fair decision to be arrived at; permission is given by the chair of the Faculty Examination Board. Chairs of School Examination Boards may refer cases to the Faculty Examination Board where it is felt that consideration of a student's progress or qualification may benefit from disclosure of the nature of the extenuating circumstance.

## **17. Penalties**

### ***For academic misconduct***

The *University's Examination Regulations* (annex 3) contain full details of the regulations and procedures to be followed in respect of academic misconduct, including plagiarism.

- 17.1 Information on what constitutes academic misconduct in respect of assessment (including clear definitions of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, impersonation and the use of inadmissible material) should be provided, or referenced by a web link, in faculty and/or school handbooks together with specific information about the consequences of such misconduct. It may be necessary for individual schools to develop additional guidance on what constitutes academic misconduct, to reflect the relevant academic discipline.
- 17.2 When recommending a penalty to a Board of Examiners, an appropriately constituted committee/panel will consider the offence and penalty independently of its potential impact on the student's degree classification. Whether the penalty for offence in question should be reflected in the degree class to be awarded is the judgement of the board. In such cases, Boards of Examiners should take into account any effect on the degree classification that the penalty already has had.

### ***For the late submission of summative coursework***

- 17.3 Students must be made aware of the existence of penalties for not meeting submission deadlines in the relevant school or faculty handbook.
- 17.4 Coursework that is submitted after a deadline should be subject to the following penalty, unless an extension has been agreed by the School, prior to the deadline, or late submission is justified by reason of illness or other validated extenuating circumstance (see Section 19):

- For modular programmes<sup>2</sup>: the late submission of work will incur a fixed absolute penalty of 10 marks for each 24-hour period after the agreed deadline, where that period includes a working day. If the work is submitted late such that at least five such 24-hour periods have elapsed, the mark awarded will automatically default to zero.
- For non-modular programmes (BDS, BVSc (including Accelerated Graduate Entry), MBChB): a fixed absolute penalty of 10 marks is applied for work that is submitted up to 24 hours after the agreed submission deadline; a mark of zero is awarded thereafter.

17.5 Penalties are applied in the form of a mark reduction from the mark the student would have achieved.

17.6 For group coursework, it is the collective responsibility of the student group to ensure and confirm that the work is submitted before the deadline. Students involved in group work for assessment may also be required to individually provide evidence of their participation in and contribution to the work of the group. If group work is submitted late, the penalty applied to the marks of individual student(s) may be retracted where there is evidence that they have satisfactorily contributed to the group work in time for the work to be submitted by the deadline, as determined by the Unit Director or other member of academic staff.

***For exceeding the size limit in summative coursework***

17.7 Faculties' policies for defining the size limit of summative coursework, by assessment type, and the penalty for exceeding the defined limit, for its taught programmes, should be in accordance with the following.

17.8 Whether specific forms of coursework are subject to a size limit, and if so:

- Whether the size limit is defined by reference to the number of pages (with font size, line spacing, margin size, and page orientation requirements), by a word / character limit or other defined limit.
- The penalty where the defined limit is exceeded.

17.9 Students must be informed in writing, at or before the date of issue of the coursework, the size limit and the penalty for exceeding the limit, if any, which shall accord with the approved unit specification. This information should also be provided on the cover sheet for the submission of the coursework.

17.10 The policy of the faculty that owns the unit will apply. It is important for students whose home programme is based in a different faculty are made fully aware that the policy applied in the submission of coursework for a unit may be different than the policy of their home faculty.

17.11 It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the work complies with the defined size limit prior to submission and to certify the size (word or page length or other defined limit) on the front cover sheet when submitting the work.

17.12 The student in question must be informed of the decision to apply the penalty for exceeding the defined size limit.

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<sup>2</sup> The previous Faculty policy applies to practical sessions, pre- and post-lab assessments in the biomedical Schools in the Faculty of Life Sciences in the 2020/21 academic year (Biochemistry, Cellular and Molecular Medicine, and Physiology, Pharmacology and Neuroscience).

## ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCESSES FOR DETERMINING PROGRESS AND AWARDS

### 18. Pass Mark

- 18.1 Within modular honours programmes, students must achieve at least 40 out of 100 to pass undergraduate (level 4-6) units.
- 18.2 Within the non-modular programmes in the Faculty of Health Sciences, students must achieve at least 50 out of 100 to pass at the unit/element level.
- 18.3 The pass mark set by the University for any level 7 (M) unit is 50 out of 100.
- 18.4 Where taught postgraduate programmes include units at level 6 (H) or lower the pass mark for those units remains 40 out of 100. Marks for these units must be taken into account in the calculation of the final programme mark and cannot be adjusted.

### 19. Extenuating Circumstances

Guidance on student circumstances and absence during the teaching period due to illness or other cause is provided at section 7, whilst further guidance for staff on the reporting, certification and consideration of student circumstances is available from:

[www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/studentsupport/student-circumstances/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/studentsupport/student-circumstances/).

A student guide to extenuating circumstances is also available at:

[www.bristolsu.org.uk/justask/extenuating-circumstances/](http://www.bristolsu.org.uk/justask/extenuating-circumstances/).

- 19.1 Extenuating circumstances are circumstances external to study within the university that a student believes has affected their performance in assessment.
- 19.2 The effects that properly reported extenuating circumstances have on a student's performance must be considered by boards of examiners when making progression, completion or classification decisions.

#### The reporting of extenuating circumstances

- 19.3 The reporting of extenuating circumstances and their effects is the responsibility of the student.
- 19.4 A student must use the university's extenuating circumstances form (available from: [www.bristol.ac.uk/students/services/forms/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/services/forms/)) in order to notify the University of any extenuating circumstances that may have affected their ability to fulfil the criteria for the award of credit points or to perform to the best of their ability in assessment events.
- 19.5 Students should provide an independently certified English translation for any evidence that was originally produced in another language. Such evidence will not normally be accepted without the English translation.
- 19.6 If a student wishes a board of examiners to take any extenuating circumstances into account, the completed extenuating circumstances form must be submitted to the relevant school office no later than the meeting of the school board of examiners at which the student's performance in assessment in relation to their progression or award is considered, normally in the academic year in which the circumstance occurred. All authorised extensions should be recorded and available to the Extenuating Circumstances Committee and the Boards of Examiners.

- 19.7 Extenuating circumstances that could have been raised before the meeting of the relevant board of examiners, but without good reason were not raised, will not be considered in the event of an appeal.
- 19.8 Schools should ensure that advice to students is available about the nature of the evidence that they will need to provide to supplement the information supplied in the University's extenuating circumstances form.
- 19.9 Information must be provided to students by schools and faculties in the relevant student handbook/s on the procedure for the treatment of medical and other extenuating circumstances. This information should include:
- the procedure that should be followed;
  - the importance of informing the school about medical or other extenuating circumstances prior to the meeting of the relevant extenuating circumstances committee
  - the date of the relevant board of examiners meeting;
  - the correct person in the school to be provided with documentation of evidence and how it will be stored.
- 19.10 Schools should ensure that their procedures are arranged so the number of copies of papers detailing extenuating circumstances is kept to a minimum.

### **Extenuating Circumstances Committees**

19.11 A small extenuating circumstances committee shall be established to consider the extenuating circumstances that may have affected a student's performance in assessment.

19.12 An Extenuating Circumstances Committee for each programme should be established for each school or at a level determined by the relevant Faculty Board.

19.13 The composition of an Extenuating Circumstances Committee will be subject to the approval of the chair of the relevant Faculty Board of Examiners. It may include the chair of the School Board of Examiners, to which it reports, and the relevant examinations officer and senior tutor.

19.14 The Extenuating Circumstances Committee is an advisory committee of the Board of Examiners. It will meet as soon as is convenient before each meeting of the School Board of Examiners to which it reports.

19.15 The role of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee is to evaluate whether or not extenuating circumstances may have affected the candidate's capacity to perform. It shall determine:

- which (if any) assessments or units may have been affected by the circumstances drawn to its attention;
- whether the circumstance is deemed to have been reasonably within the student's control, evidenced and/or sufficiently serious to warrant an allowance;
- the period of time over which the student's performance was impaired and whether the extenuating circumstance was acute (of short duration and only likely to have had a negative impact upon the student's performance in the assessment) or chronic (over a significant period of time and therefore likely to have had an impact upon their learning as well as their performance in the assessment);

- whether the impact on the student's capacity to perform is likely to have been mild, moderate, serious or severe;
- whether sufficient allowance for the circumstances has already been made, for example, by making special arrangements for examinations or by granting extensions to deadlines.

The committee may also wish to comment upon the degree of confidence that it has on the impact of the reported circumstances given the evidence available, if it feels it is necessary to do so.

The committee should also consider whether any reasonable adjustment for a disability is sufficient to account for any extenuating circumstances presented by a student (within the extenuating circumstance form).

- 19.16 It is not the role of the extenuating circumstances committee to determine the effect, if any, on the candidate's results. All decisions on the accommodation of the effects of extenuating circumstances on progression and awards will be made by the board of examiners.
- 19.17 The extenuating circumstances committee should use its discretion and judgement in deciding on the severity and impact in any particular case.
- 19.18 If the committee is unable to classify the circumstance, particularly in complex cases, it should flag and recommend to the relevant Board of Examiners that professional advice is sought to help in the interpretation of existing evidence and/or supplementary evidence.
- 19.19 The committee must note the reasons underlying its decisions and these notes, along with information on the period of time in which the circumstances affected the student and the assessments / forms of learning that were affected, should form its report to the Board of Examiners. All cases where a student has self-certified absence from an examination due to illness should be recorded by the School.
- 19.20 The relevant minute of the extenuating circumstances committee should be made available to a student on request.
- 19.21 Information about the precise medical or other extenuating circumstances of the candidate must remain confidential to the extenuating circumstances committee.
- 19.22 The Faculty or School should establish a procedure for ensuring that judgements are as consistent and robust as possible, in-year and year-on-year.

### **Consideration of extenuating circumstances by boards of examiners**

19.23 The School Board of Examiners will receive the report provided by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee and consider the case of each student who has presented extenuating circumstances, and then determine the effect, if any, on the candidate's results.

- 19.24 The School Board of Examiners will determine whether a student's performance has been substantially affected by extenuating circumstances beyond their control and what action, if any, is required to take into account these circumstances, as is fair and reasonable. Information about a student circumstance should not be introduced in an examination board, unless in exceptional circumstances, as set out in 16.14 of the Taught Code.
- 19.25 The options that will normally be considered by a Board of Examiners are outlined in 19.26-19.30, subject to the following caveats, where applicable:

- i. Students who are absent from an examination due to illness and who self-certificate, will be required to undertake the examination at the next scheduled time the examination is run, normally in the August / September 're-sit' period, without penalty. An accepted extenuating circumstance may supersede a self-certificated absence from an examination by a student where the circumstance relates to the reason for the original absence and covers the same time period.
- ii. Where a summative assessment has not been completed because of validated extenuating circumstances (not including self-certified absence on its own), a Faculty Board of Examiners may, in light of the report by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee, waive the requirement for the student to successfully complete the assessment on the basis of the extenuating circumstances, if it is satisfied that the intended learning outcomes for the unit are fulfilled by the successful completion of other assessments. In such situations, a Faculty Board of Examiners may disregard the assessment in considering whether to award credit for the unit. The Chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners may agree to the waiving of assessments on a case-by-case basis in-year.

19.26 In the case of non-final year undergraduate students on modular programmes, if a student has extenuating circumstances which have been accepted, the School Board of Examiners may decide to (but not exclusively):

- take no action;
- permit the student to repeat the assessment (in the same or alternative form) without losing an attempt where a fail mark prevents the credit points being awarded for the unit;
- award credit for the affected unit(s), notwithstanding a fail mark, on the basis of performance in other contexts within the unit(s);
- permit the student to repeat the entire year of study again or undertake a supplementary year (depending upon the amount of credit in the year of study the student has already achieved) without penalty;
- place the report on the extenuating circumstances on file for consideration by the board of examiners when they make an award to the student.

19.27 In the case of final year undergraduate students on modular programmes, if a student has extenuating circumstances which have been accepted, the School Board of Examiners may decide to (but not exclusively):

- take no action;
- permit the student to repeat the assessment (in the same or alternative form) without losing an attempt where a fail mark prevents the credit points being awarded for the unit;
- award credit for the affected unit(s), notwithstanding a fail mark, on the basis of performance in other contexts;
- disregard the affected mark for the purposes of calculating the final programme mark and degree classification (in such cases, the affected unit mark/s should be removed from the calculation of the year mark, before the degree classification weighting for the programme is applied);
- permit the student to repeat the entire year of study or undertake a supplementary year (depending upon the amount of credit in the year of study the student has already achieved) without penalty;



- award a classified degree, under Ordinance 18, where a student is prevented by illness or other substantial cause from completing a minor part of assessment and the Board is unable to make an academic award under any other of the University's regulations.
- award an Aegrotat degree, under Ordinance 18.

19.28 In the case of undergraduates on non-modular undergraduate programmes, extenuating circumstances are only considered if a student is subject to discussion at the Board of Examiners. If a student has extenuating circumstances which have been accepted, the Board of Examiners may decide to (but not exclusively):

- take no action;
- permit the student to repeat the assessment (in the same or alternative form) without losing an attempt where a fail mark prevents the unit being passed;
- permit the student to repeat the entire year of study again as for the first time (although the School Board of Examiners may also apply supplementary conditions for progression).

19.29 For taught postgraduate students in the taught component of the programme, if a student has extenuating circumstances which have been accepted, the Board of Examiners may decide to (but not exclusively):

- take no action;
- permit the student to repeat the assessment (in the same or alternative form) without losing an attempt where a fail mark prevents the credit points being awarded for the unit;
- award credit for the affected unit(s), notwithstanding a fail mark, on the basis of performance in other contexts within the unit(s);
- disregard the affected mark for the purposes of progression;
- permit the student to repeat the entire taught component or undertake a supplementary year (depending upon the amount of credit the student has already achieved) without penalty;
- award an Aegrotat degree, under Ordinance 18;
- place the report on the extenuating circumstances on file for consideration by the board of examiners when they make an award to the student.

19.30 For taught postgraduate students in the dissertation component of the programme, if a student has extenuating circumstances which have been accepted, the Board of Examiners may, depending upon the categorised impact of the circumstance, decide to:

- take no action;
- allow the re-submission of the dissertation without penalty.

19.31 The manipulation of the mark itself is not permissible.

19.32 Where a student has successfully completed a unit but the board of examiners considers that their performance was impaired by extenuating circumstances, then this will be put on file for consideration by the relevant board of examiners at a future point.

19.33 A Board of Examiners must consider the effect of extenuating circumstances from previous years, if applicable, on its decision-making (e.g. the application of the secondary rule for classification).

19.34 Each recommended allowance made by School Boards of Examiners with respect to extenuating circumstances will be presented to the Faculty Board of Examiners for approval.

19.35 The Faculty Board of Examiners will ensure:

- that students are being treated consistently across the faculty;
- that decisions are consistent with respect to the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes;
- that a fair outcome is achieved, particularly with respect to complex cases.

19.36 The chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners may amend the classification of the impact of an extenuating circumstance that has been made by an extenuating circumstances committee, before it reaches the board of examiners, where:

- (i) new information has come to light since the classification was decided, or;
- (ii) a material irregularity in determining the classification by the extenuating circumstances committee is uncovered.

19.37 The chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners may appoint committees to advise the Board on the treatment of students with extenuating circumstances as they think fit. All decisions are reserved to the Faculty Board of Examiners itself.

19.38 Boards of Examiners must keep a written record of the decisions made with respect to extenuating circumstances and the basis on which they were made. The relevant record must be made available to a student to which it applies on request.

## 20. Boards of Examiners

Guidance on the operation of boards of examiners meetings is available at:

[www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/academic-quality/documents/taught-code/guidance-operation-exam-boards.pdf](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/academic-quality/documents/taught-code/guidance-operation-exam-boards.pdf).

### School (or 'initial') board of examiners

20.1 The board of examiners may convene at a school, departmental or programme level.

20.2 The board of examiners may be convened for one or more of the purposes outlined below at any time during the year.

20.3 Anonymity must be preserved insofar as is practicable when marks are considered at school boards of examiners.

20.4 Discussions held at the Board of Examiners are confidential, although students may request to see the minute relating to consideration of their individual circumstance.

20.5 A Board may be convened virtually, by correspondence, under the same auspices, but a quorate number of replies must be received for any decision to be enacted. The decision should subsequently be confirmed and recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Board.

20.6 Chair's powers may be granted with the explicit agreement of a Board to enact a specific and defined action, subsequent to the meeting.

### *Membership and quorum*

20.7 As stated in Ordinance 17, a board comprising at least three people shall be convened to approve each undergraduate and taught postgraduate academic award of the University.

- 20.8 The board should be chaired by the Head of School or Department (or equivalent), or their nominee.
- 20.9 The membership of boards of examiners will normally comprise the internal and external examiners for each subject or group of subjects in the programme of study.
- 20.10 Internal examiners are invited to attend each meeting of the board of examiners, although a School will have discretion as to which of its members is required to attend.
- 20.11 External examiners are required to be notified of all meetings of the Board of Examiners for programmes which lead to a University award, to which they have been appointed as external examiner, and their right to attend them. The external examiner should attend at least one meeting of the Board in each academic year, as specified by the School. Where the School and External Examiner both agree that they need not attend a particular meeting, the External Examiner should be sent the minutes from the meeting.
- 20.12 A Faculty Education Director, or nominee, may attend School board of examiners in order to aid interpretation of any new policy and provide insight on particularly complex cases.

#### *Purpose*

20.13 The purpose of the School Board of Examiners is to:

- i. Review the rigour and appropriateness of assessment and, where necessary, agree any recommendations in order to remedy anomalies in the mark distribution for each unit under the jurisdiction of the Board. This includes the scaling of marks where an assessment has not resulted in the intended outcome, which requires the explicit approval of the relevant Faculty Education Director, in accordance with the Taught Code.
- ii. Accept and approve the marks that are under its jurisdiction.
- iii. Consider the report from the relevant Extenuating Circumstances Committees, in cases of students who have presented extenuating circumstances, in order to determine the effect, if any, on an individual student's performance in assessment.
- iv. Consider any recommended penalties in cases of academic misconduct, including plagiarism.
- v. Consider whether the student has fulfilled any additional requirements for progression or completion, as specified by the programme.
- vi. On the basis of the marks provided for each student and the outcome from points iii-v, if applicable, make a recommendation to the Faculty Board of Examiners of the faculty in which the degree is awarded with regard to:
  - Progression;
  - Completion; and/or,
  - Classification of an award.

#### *Information for consideration*

20.14 The Board shall receive and consider:

- The mark profile of each student being considered
- Reports from the Extenuating Circumstances Committees
- Any recommendations from the relevant panel with regard to cases of academic misconduct

- Any additional information that has a bearing on a student's progression or completion of an award

#### *Output from the meeting*

- 20.15 The written record of the meeting will include: the explicit agreement of the marks received, any changes to them and the reasons for doing so and the details of any recommended course of action in cases of extenuating circumstances.
- 20.16 A report will be made to the Faculty Board of Examiners drawing attention to the issues it wishes to raise, including recommendations with regard to progression, the award of a qualification and/or degree classification for each student and any proposed penalties for academic misconduct, extenuating circumstances (with the report from the extenuating circumstances committee appended) and the details of any complex cases.

#### **Faculty board of examiners**

- 20.17 Where a Faculty has decided that a committee other than the Board of Examiners is constituted to make decisions about the progression of students, this committee will have the same responsibilities as that of a Faculty Board of Examiners.
- 20.18 Anonymity must be preserved at Faculty Board of Examiners, unless there is good reason to remove the anonymity for an individual student, which is judged to be in the student's interests, as described in 16.14. It is at the discretion of the Chair of the board whether the removal of anonymity should be applied, on a case by case basis.
- 20.19 Discussions held at the Faculty Board of Examiners are confidential, subject to where the relevant record of discussion of an individual student is requested and provided to the student in question.
- 20.20 A Board may be convened virtually, by correspondence, under the same auspices, but a quorate number of replies must be received for any decision to be enacted. The decision should subsequently be confirmed and recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Board.
- 20.21 Chair's powers may be granted with the explicit agreement of a Board to enact a specific and defined action, subsequent to the meeting.

#### *Membership and quorum*

- 20.22 As stated in Ordinance 17, the faculty board of examiners shall be chaired by the dean or their nominee and its composition shall be determined by the faculty board.
- 20.23 Each faculty should have a policy on the quoracy of its boards of examiners.

#### *Purpose*

- 20.24 The purpose of the Faculty Board of Examiners is to:
- Approve the marks, as presented to it by the School.
  - Approve any action to mitigate the effect of extenuating circumstances on a student's performance in assessment (including the conferring of an Aegrotat award).
  - Agree penalties for alleged cases of cheating or plagiarism, in accordance with the Examination Regulations.
  - Ensure that the proper procedures have been carried out and decisions are consistent with respect to the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes, such that fair and consistent outcomes are achieved, particularly

with respect to complex cases, across all schools. In this, the faculty board of examiners shall not question the academic judgement of the initial examination board, but shall ensure the proper procedures are carried out, in accordance with Ordinance 17.

- Monitor trends and any major deviations from norms faculty-wide.
- Approve progression outcomes and award results.
- Consider any 'exceptional' action, as recommended to it, in respect of progression or award outcomes.

20.25 A meeting of the Board should be held shortly after the January examination period to agree the marks in each unit from the first teaching block such that they can be released to students, prior to their formal confirmation by an external examiner/s. The Board may also undertake any of the other purposes listed above, where it is possible to do so.

#### *Information for consideration*

20.26 The Board shall receive and consider:

- A report from the School board of examiners containing the provisional recommendation for progression, the award of a qualification and/or degree classification for each student presented for consideration. The Board can accept or amend recommendations made by the School.
- Reports from schools on any proposed penalties for academic misconduct, extenuating circumstances and complex issues that it would like to bring to the attention of the Board.

20.27 The Board should also consider any new information that has come to light, which has not been previously considered.

#### *Output from the meeting*

20.28 A written record (minutes) of the meeting must be kept, including the reasons for decisions and the basis on which they were made. The record must also contain adequate details of where extenuating circumstances have been taken into account and any discretionary decision made by the Board – and its reason for doing so. The definitive version of any such documentation will be held at the Faculty level.

## **21. Appeals against decisions of the Boards of Examiners**

21.1 All information concerning the University's regulations for appeals against the decisions of Boards of examiners is contained in annex 3, the *University's Examination Regulations*.

21.2 It is essential to address a student's representation against a decision of a board of examiners as early as possible, and initially within the respective school and faculty. Students must be made aware of section 11 of the *Examination Regulations* governing appeals, with particular attention drawn to the 15-working day deadline from the date of notification of the decision for submitting a formal appeal.

21.3 Information on the University's student complaints procedure can be found at [www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/studentrulesregs/complaints.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/studentrulesregs/complaints.html).

## **22. Roles Responsible for Determining Progression and Awards**

### ***Faculty Education Directors***

22.1 It is the responsibility of the Faculty Education Directors to ensure that university and faculty regulations, policies and procedures with respect to these Regulations and Code are implemented in their faculties. In doing this they will work closely with schools, Faculty Education Managers and the University Education Directors (Quality).

The Faculty Education Director job description is available at:

[www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/contact/eddirectors.html](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/contact/eddirectors.html)

### ***Programme Directors***

22.2 Programme Directors must be familiar with all regulations that relate to their programme including this Code.

22.3 The Programme Director is responsible for the quality assurance of the programme for which they are responsible, including arrangements for annually reviewing the programme. A common role profile is available from: [www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/facultyadvice/policy/#role-profiles](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/facultyadvice/policy/#role-profiles).

### ***Internal examiners***

22.4 Heads of School should nominate an individual to be responsible for liaising with the External Examiner. This would normally be the Programme Director or the Examinations Officer. It must be clear to all concerned who will undertake this role.

22.5 A list of all internal examiners, including anyone not holding academic status at the University, should be submitted annually by the school for approval by the relevant faculty board.

22.6 The unit director, who will also be an internal examiner, is academically responsible for the unit's summative assessment. This person should ensure that the following tasks are completed satisfactorily: the setting of papers and ensuring they are error-free, responding to external examiner comments, preparing any relevant assessment and marking criteria, leading teams of markers (where appropriate), ensuring a proper process of internal verification and agreeing sets of marks. The nominated internal examiner is responsible to the school board of examiners.

22.7 The nominated internal examiner is responsible for establishing procedures at school level to enter and check the marks for each individual piece of assessed work which forms the basis for examiners' meetings.

### ***School examinations officer(s)***

22.8 School examinations officer(s) will be appointed by the Head of School. Their role is to organise and co-ordinate the school's assessment processes, from the preparation of examination papers provided by internal examiners to the accurate recording of assessment marks and their presentation to the School and Faculty Boards of Examiners.

22.9 School examinations officer(s) are the principal line of communication of the School with the Faculty and to the University Examinations Office (Education Services).

### ***External examiners***

22.10 The University's Policy for the External Examining of Taught Programmes provides full details of the role of external examiners and the University's external examining processes (see annex 7).

## 23. Treatment and Publication of Results

### *Disclosure of marks and results*

- 23.1 Marks are provisional until they have been approved by the Faculty Board of Examiners.
- 23.2 A detailed breakdown of results should only be disclosed to the individual receiving the award. Faculties must have clear procedures for such disclosure of marks.
- 23.3 Degree results may be published on school notice boards or websites at the discretion of the relevant school(s). The identity of the student must be protected when publishing these results (e.g. by using the students' University of Bristol numbers not names).
- 23.4 Schools should ensure that there are arrangements following the meeting of the Faculty Board of Examiners for appropriate members of staff to be available to advise students of the results agreed by the board of examiners for individual papers or units and, where appropriate, to advise whether the board of examiners took account of any recommendation regarding extenuating circumstances. In disclosing marks to students, staff should take care not to enter into discussion about the apparent fairness or otherwise of the mark(s) agreed by the board of examiners.
- 23.5 Students making representations to staff, a Faculty Education Director or the Dean regarding any disputed decision of a Board of Examiners should be informed of their right to make a formal appeal under section 11 of the Examination Regulations.
- 23.6 Faculties and schools must bear in mind the need to comply with the Data Protection Act when disclosing personal information.

### *Transcripts*

- 23.7 The transcript is intended to provide useful information to potential employers or to other universities (in the case of credit transfer) and to facilitate better understanding of the student's level of attainment overall and in individual units.
- 23.8 For the purpose of transcripts and credit transfer, the University will make it clear how the student has performed in assessments relating both to the achievement of credit points and to overall performance.
- 23.9 The transcript in the approved format will show a single mark for each unit, which represents the mark agreed by the Boards of Examiners. This might be a combined mark to take into account different elements of assessment such as written work, practicals, coursework etc.
- 23.10 A copy of the transcript, in the approved format, will be provided automatically to students on completion of their studies. Subsequently, a charge will be levied for the provision of transcripts to graduated students.

### *Retention of student work*

- 23.11 Schools should judge what summatively-assessed work needs to be retained so to ensure that such work is available in the case of appeal. For this reason, the work of a student would not normally be retained for longer than a year following graduation.
- 23.12 Schools should also take into account the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, where relevant.

## C. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES ONLY

### 24. Admission and Study

- 24.1 To be eligible for admission to a programme of study candidates shall have such qualifications as Senate shall determine. Most candidates for admission to the University will be at least 18 years old on entry. If a candidate is selected who will be under 18 years of age on admission, such admission shall be conditional on a declaration by the Academic Registrar or nominee that satisfactory arrangements have been made for the student's accommodation and pastoral care, in accordance with the *University's Policy on Safeguarding* (see [www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/legal/safeguarding/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/legal/safeguarding/)).
- 24.2 No student shall be permitted to register and be admitted to any programme of study at the start of any academic year if that student:
- has failed to satisfy the academic requirements of the programme for the previous year of study, as outlined in the regulations for the progression of students on taught programmes; or
  - is in debt to the University in respect of tuition or other ancillary fees, accommodation fees or fines properly imposed for breach of any University regulation, unless specific arrangements have been agreed with the University for the settlement of the debt; or
  - is suspended.
- 24.3 Students must register on their programmes within the first two weeks of teaching of the academic year. If a student is unable to register in that time, they will be required to suspend their studies until the following academic year or withdraw from the programme.
- 24.4 The consent of the Faculty Board shall be necessary for the admission of a student to any assessment and to each part of a programme. Each programme is governed by the University Examination Regulations (see annex 3).
- 24.5 Each student shall attend such lectures, discussion periods, tutorials, practical classes, design classes, fieldwork, vacation courses and any other educational activities, as described in the unit and programme specification, and shall undertake such written and other work as may be required. Each student shall also attend, as an integral part of the programme, such work placements, vacation courses and fieldwork as are defined in the programme and are required of her/him. Each student shall also undertake any professional requirements, as described in the programme specification. Each student shall undertake such assessments as are arranged.
- 24.6 The failure of any student to show satisfactory progress on the programme, including failure in summative assessment, failure to obtain credit points or to attend regularly any prescribed part of a programme (including such lectures, discussion periods, tutorial and practical classes, fieldwork, design classes and vacation courses as may be required) or to undertake prescribed written or other work or to present themselves for any examination or to reach a satisfactory standard in any assessment or any part or parts of an assessment, shall be reported to the Faculty Board which may at any time, if it thinks fit, require the student concerned to repeat part of a programme or to retake an assessment or to withdraw from a unit or units or the whole programme in accordance with the University regulations on student progression. Any student who has been required to withdraw shall be informed in writing of the decision and of the University procedures for making representations against the decision.



24.7 The Faculty Board of Examiners shall determine whether a candidate, on completion of the programme including the final assessment, has obtained the required number of credit points for the award of a degree, diploma or certificate. The class of the degree will be determined in accordance with the University regulations on degree classification.

24.8 A student who has obtained 120 credit points at level 4 or above but who either does not proceed to undertake further units or does not satisfactorily complete further units may, if their faculty has made provision, be awarded a Certificate of Higher Education. Similarly, a candidate registered for a higher award who has obtained 240 credit points at appropriate levels may, if their faculty has made provision, be awarded a Diploma of Higher Education (see the University's Credit Framework in section 4 for more details).

For the purposes of the Intercalated Degree of BSc in the Faculty of Health Sciences, or the BA in Medical Humanities in the Faculty of Arts, each year of study in the MB,ChB, BDS or BVSc programme shall be deemed to be worth 120 credit points.

24.9 Study and assessment carried out under the supervision of the University, or in another institution approved by Senate, and the credit points obtained from there may be accepted towards the fulfilment of the requirements of a particular programme.

In every case, except where there is a specific agreement with another institution that has been approved by Senate or in the case of the BSc (Hons) in Social Work with Children and Young People or the BSc (Hons) in Professional Practice with Children and Young People, a candidate for a degree programme must take and satisfactorily complete University of Bristol units which comprise the final 120 credit points of the programme.

24.10 For awards of the University of Bristol, except as specified below, credit points may only be used once and not towards two or more awards of this University or of another higher education provider and this University. The exceptions are:

- a) where an award at one level may be subsumed into an award at a higher level;
- b) where a University award or award of another institution has independent standing as a professional qualification and is accredited by a professional body;
- c) where a medical, dental or veterinary student of this University intercalates a year of study for the degree of BSc or BA in this University or elsewhere, or where a medical, dental or veterinary student from another institution intercalates a year of study for the degree of BSc or BA in this University.

The use of credit or a lower award from this University towards an award of another institution is at the discretion of that awarding institution, including as part of articulation agreements where a partner institution might count the credit or qualification obtained at Bristol towards their own award.

24.11 No student who is registered for a programme of full-time study leading to a qualification of the University of Bristol may study concurrently on a programme of full or part-time study leading to the award of a qualification at this or another higher education provider.

24.12 The University does not encourage students to take more than the required units for any programme. However, if a student chooses to do so neither the credit nor the marks accumulated will count towards their final award.

24.13 Students may be permitted to transfer between programmes subject to approval, but there is no automatic right of transfer between programmes. The academic record of

the student (i.e. the credit and marks for any relevant units and the time they have already spent studying in relation to the maximum period of study), will normally follow when transferring programme, except for students who change their programme of study and enter the first year of a non-cognate programme, in which case their academic record will not follow and the period of study is re-set. Changing a programme of study is subject to sufficient space being available and the applicant meeting the academic criteria and requirements for the new programme and any visa requirements, should they apply. See annex 5 for the University's policy on student transfer between undergraduate programmes and units of the University.

24.14 Subject to Ordinance 15, the following table shows the normal and maximum periods of study for full-time undergraduate awards covered by these regulations. These periods of study include extensions but exclude suspensions of study. Periods of study for part-time students shall be calculated pro-rata to the periods of full-time study. A student on a modular programme will normally only be able to take an additional year (e.g. a supplementary year) due to extenuating circumstances once during their programme of study. A student on a non-modular professional programme will normally only be able to extend their normal period of study by up to two additional years due to either extenuating circumstances or academic failure.

24.15 Tier 4 students registered on a four-year Integrated Masters Degree in most circumstances cannot undertake a second supplementary year due to UK Immigration Rules' application of a five-year study cap to Tier 4 study in the UK. Please contact the Student Visa Services Team to determine whether a student may be eligible. Additionally, Tier 4 students registered on a five-year Integrated Masters degree (e.g. with a Year Abroad/ in Industry) cannot undertake a supplementary year in any circumstance due to the same restriction on the visa.

Title of Award	Period of Study	
	Normal	Maximum
Professional (5-year) non-modular degree (BDS, BVSc, MB,ChB)	5 academic years	7 academic years
Professional (4-year) non-modular degree (BVSc Accelerated Graduate Entry)	4 academic years	6 academic years
Integrated (5-year) Masters degree (e.g. with a Year Abroad/in Industry)	5 academic years	6 academic years
Integrated 4-year Masters Degree	4 academic years	5 academic years
Honours Bachelors (4-year) Degree	4 academic years	5 academic years
Honours Bachelors (3-year) Degree	3 academic years	4 academic years
Honours Bachelors Degree that requires study abroad or in industry (i.e. away from the University) for one academic year	4 academic years	5 academic years
Honours Bachelors Degree by Intercalation	1 academic year	1 academic year
Foundation Degree	2 academic years	4 academic years
Undergraduate Diploma of Higher Education	2 academic years	3 academic years
Undergraduate Certificate of Higher Education	1 academic year	1 academic year

## 25. Programme Structure and Design

- 25.1 Undergraduate programmes may be a single unitary degree or a joint degree devoting approximately equal time to two subjects or a major/minor combination where the minor subject accounts for at least a quarter of the programme.
- 25.2 Where a programme crosses faculty or school boundaries, one of the contributing schools or faculties must own the programme and apply the relevant regulations as set out in this document. For programmes that span faculties the programme committee must decide the 'owning' school or faculty, guided by the balance of the programme and the home school / faculty of the academic lead.
- 25.3 The degrees of BA, BSc, BEng, LLB, may be awarded with honours or as ordinary degrees. Names of successful candidates for honours shall be arranged as follows: first class honours; second class honours in two divisions and third-class honours. The names of successful candidates for the ordinary degrees shall be listed separately.
- 25.4 The degrees of MSci, MArts, MLibArts and MEng may be awarded with honours, as follows: first class honours and second-class honours in two divisions.
- 25.5 The normal requirement for each full-time year of undergraduate study is not less than 120 credit points and not more than 130.

### **Preliminary Year programmes** (see annex 1 for definition)

#### ***Programme structure***

- 25.6 The normal period of study for programmes that include a preliminary year will be four years for Bachelors and five years for Integrated Masters. The maximum period of study for programmes that contain a preliminary year is six years for a Bachelors degree and seven years for an Integrated Masters degree. Within this, the normal period of study for the preliminary year is one year and the maximum is two years on a full-time basis.
- 25.7 The preliminary year will normally consist of units taught at the equivalent of level 3 and exceptionally level 4 units where there is a good academic reason to do so.
- 25.8 No unit should be identical to those taught in the undergraduate programmes onto which successful students would progress.
- 25.9 Schools must ensure that the preliminary year is sufficiently rigorous to prepare students for successful study at degree level.
- 25.10 The standard of units that are taught at the equivalent of level 3 should be broadly equivalent to A- level standard where that is applicable. Schools may adapt the University Marking Criteria for these units.
- 25.11 A mark of at least 40 out of 100 must be achieved for a student to pass a unit.
- 25.12 Whilst credit points may be associated with a unit to indicate the notional amount of input required by a student, credit is not awarded for units taught at the equivalent of level 3.

#### ***Progression***

- 25.13 The progression criteria for the preliminary year will be the same as for all modular programmes, unless stated below.
- 25.14 Students who successfully pass all the units in the preliminary year will have been deemed to have completed the year and will progress onto the first year of the degree programme.

- 25.15 Where compensated progression is undesirable, all units should be designated as 'must pass'.
- 25.16 Second attempt resit examinations shall be permitted.
- 25.17 Supplementary years (other than for extenuating circumstances) shall not be permitted.
- 25.18 Schools may allow transfer to other programmes at the end of the preliminary year. Higher requirements for such a transfer than just successfully completing the year may be specified for such a transfer.

### **Awards**

- 25.19 On completion of the programme, the student should be awarded the title of the named degree programme (i.e. without reference to the preliminary year).
- 25.20 A student who has completed the preliminary year by passing all the units but who does not proceed onto a University of Bristol programme will receive a certificate. The certificate will be a record of achievement rather than a distinct award, and so shall not indicate an overall pass or fail.

### **Integrated Masters degree**

- 25.21 Integrated Masters degrees must state in their programme specifications whether they are of the advanced study type (type II as defined by the QAA), professional type (type III) and/or has a formal period of study abroad / in industry.
- 25.22 Integrated Masters degrees without a period of study abroad or in industry will have an exit award of a Bachelors Honours degree at the end of the third year of study, in accordance with the University's credit framework. Where the exit award for the integrated masters has the same title as a free-standing degree also awarded by the University, students leaving with the exit award must have completed the same or directly equivalent programme learning outcomes as graduates from the free-standing programme.
- 25.23 If independent study (e.g. project or dissertation) is a faculty requirement for the award of a degree, schools should ensure that any students who graduate with an exit award of a Bachelors Honours degree have completed the designated independent study, constituting a unit of at least 20 credits units at level 6.
- 25.24 Where exit awards are not professionally accredited, this must be set out in the programme specification and reiterated to students prior to the start of the second year of study.

### **Student choice**

- 25.25 Full time students on undergraduate degree programmes will normally have the opportunity to broaden their education by taking units outside of their subject discipline (i.e. 'open units') worth at least 20 credit points across the programme, except where this is not practicable, for example, due to professional accreditation reasons.
- 25.26 Faculties and schools will determine the point during a student's career at which open units may be taken.
- 25.27 Students do not have a right to take any particular unit as an open unit and should not undertake an open unit in which they are already proficient. The availability of any particular unit is subject to practical constraints such as space in teaching rooms or laboratories and timetabling. Subject to these constraints, students may also seek to take a unit (or units), which has not been flagged as being an 'open unit'.

25.28 Students are not required to take open units. If they wish, and subject to the programme structure and practical constraints described in 25.27, they may take the 20 credit points set aside for open units in their honours subject(s).

## 26. Study Abroad

26.1 The common University policy on the study abroad period applies to those undergraduate modular programmes where either:

- a. An identified requisite of the programme is for a student to study abroad for an academic year for the award of credit, hereafter known as the 'Year Abroad'. The accomplishment of the study abroad element is reflected in the title of the programme (e.g. MSci Chemistry with Study Abroad or MSci Chemistry with Study in Continental Europe).
- b. A student is permitted to study at another institution for credit in lieu of the units that the student would normally have taken at Bristol (i.e. a 'Teaching Block Abroad'). Such arrangements are not an integral part of a programme but are recognised in the student's transcript.

All other arrangements, where students study abroad for experiential reasons (i.e. not for credit), are not covered by this policy.

### ***Principles for the studying abroad process***

#### *All formal arrangements for studying abroad*

26.2 Where the learning from any period of formal study undertaken outside of the UK is a required part of the programme, how the intended learning outcomes of the programme are met must be identified.

26.3 Any formal period of study abroad must be credit-bearing and contribute to the award of the programme and consequently the degree classification (i.e. and therefore not pass/fail).

26.4 Any mark(s) from a period of study abroad may be reached, solely or in combination, by assessment set by the University of Bristol (i.e. by assessing what a student has learnt during their experience) or by the conversion of marks that have been gained at the partner institution.

26.5 Where the mark is obtained by a combination of assessments set by Bristol and the partner institution, the weighting of the constituent marks and the expected input of the student to each component must be agreed and set out in the specification for the study abroad unit.

26.6 Schools should ensure that students are fully aware of the requirements of their University of Bristol programme of study whilst undertaking any period of study abroad prior to the student committing themselves to it.

26.7 A tutor within each School must maintain regular contact with a student undertaking a study abroad arrangement, whilst they are away from the University.

#### *'Year Abroad' only*

26.8 The Year Abroad should only be undertaken in the third year of a four or five-year (Bachelors or Integrated Masters) programme. It is not expected that students will undertake an entire year of study away from the University as part of a three-year Bachelors programme.

- 26.9 The Year Abroad must be set at the level of study appropriate to the programme and in alignment with the University's credit framework.
- 26.10 The Year Abroad equates to 60 ECTS and 120 credit points at the University of Bristol.
- 26.11 A common credit conversion process is available to ensure that students undertake an appropriate workload whilst studying abroad. Students must undertake at least the equivalent of 100, and no more than 120, credit points of units during the Year Abroad. The marks from units, equivalent to at least 100 credit points, will count towards the mark for the Year Abroad, unless there is a specific rationale for an alternative approach, which must be applied to the entire cohort of students. Any further study may be in units unrelated to the subject and, in such cases, will not count towards the mark for the Year Abroad.
- 26.12 A student's performance will be reflected by a single overall mark for the learning undertaken across the year, unless the programme is structured so that students are assessed at differing levels of study during their Year Abroad. Only the overall unit mark should be considered when determining progression from year to year at the University of Bristol.
- 26.13 A student must achieve at least the pass mark for the study abroad or in industry unit to be awarded the credit.
- 26.14 Progression from the study abroad year or year in industry will be permitted where a student achieves 120 credit points with an overall year mark of at least 40 out of 100. A student who does not achieve the pass mark for a study abroad or placement unit and/or does not achieve the necessary criteria for progression should be transferred onto the appropriate point on an equivalent degree programme, as determined by the relevant exam board.
- 26.15 The Study Abroad year will be weighted as 10% of the overall programme mark for the purposes of degree classification (see annex 12).

*'Teaching Block Abroad' only*

- 26.16 Studying abroad for a teaching block must not be undertaken in the student's first or final year of their programme of study.
- 26.17 Normally a teaching block undertaken at a partner institution outside of the UK will equate to 30 ECTS and 60 credit points at the University of Bristol. A common credit conversion process is available to ensure that students undertake an appropriate workload whilst studying abroad that is consonant with the volume of credit they otherwise would have taken at Bristol.
- 26.18 A student's performance should be reflected by individual marks, equivalent to the units a student would have undertaken in their registered programme of study at the University of Bristol. These unit marks will contribute to the calculation of the year mark, final programme mark and degree classification, as normal.
- 26.19 If a student fails a 'must-pass' unit (i.e. deemed by the faculty to be a core part of the programme) during a Teaching Block Abroad, a re-sit should be arranged at the University of Bristol.

***Process for the conversion of marks gained from study abroad***

- 26.20 Given the variation in structures and standards in the marking process in institutions and across countries outside of the UK, some translation or mapping of the marks to the equivalent standards of the University, as a UK higher education institution, may be required.

The University has adopted an evidence-based approach for converting marks gained from studying abroad, in the form of a common mark conversion table, based upon the following principles:

- A single conversion for each country, unless evidence indicates this is not appropriate, using the ECTS conversion tables.
- Where there is evidence a country-based approach is not appropriate, an institution wide approach should be adopted, i.e. presume that the institution is internally consistent, unless there is actual evidence this is not the case.
- Only where there is actual evidence of inconsistency in marking should we have different disciplinary rules within a single institution.
- Variation from that table should only occur where there are extenuating circumstances in particular cases, although extenuating circumstances may be contextualised differently when students are studying in another country.

- 26.21 For the **Year Abroad** - the overall mark will be calculated by averaging all the contributing weighted marks from the host institution and, if necessary, any weighted marks awarded by the University of Bristol. If the partner institution uses a linear marking scale, the conversion provided in the Reference Table is then applied to the overall mark. If the partner institution does not use a linear marking scale, each of the individual marks should be translated before being averaged.
- 26.22 The conversion of the overall mark must be mapped onto the 0-100 scale, so to conform to the University's procedures for determining student progression and degree classification, unless it is necessary to use a different marking scale, whereby the processing of marks from the study abroad period will be conducted using the 0-100 scale and then translated to the nearest point on the alternative marking scale.
- 26.23 The mark(s) awarded, following conversion, for the study abroad period should be reviewed to ensure that it is robust.
- 26.24 The conversion and subsequent review of the marks is the responsibility of the School Study Abroad Academic Director, or equivalent.
- 26.25 The relevant Board of Examiners that considers the marks retains discretion to disregard any relevant marks from units taken at the host institution or adjust the marks from those shown in the Conversion Table where there is evidence that the marks gained from the host institution is not an accurate reflection of the student's performance.
- 26.26 The conversion algorithm of marks for any new partnership arrangement for study abroad should be checked against those provided in the Conversion Table and confirmed before the agreement is signed.
- 26.27 The University's official transcript will show the University of Bristol translated mark from the study abroad period.

### **Exceptions**

- 26.28 Where there is a good academic reason to request an exception from one or more of the principles, the programme director should make a case to the relevant Faculty Education Director well in advance of the commencement of any arrangements for a student to study abroad. If the Faculty Education Director approves the case, it will be presented to the Learning and Teaching Committee for incorporation into the Conversion Table.

## 27. Industrial placements

The following principles cover the formal component of 'study in industry', 'industrial experience' or 'research placement' where an identified aim of a programme is for a student to study in industrial placement, for part of or an entire academic year for the award of credit. The form of the study will be reflected in the title of the programme (e.g. BSc Biochemistry with Study in Industry) where the study covers an entire academic year.

All other arrangements, whereby students undertake a placement in industry for experiential reasons (i.e. not for credit) or a research project with an external partner, are not covered by these principles.

- 27.1 Where the learning from any period of formal study in industry is a required part of the programme, how the intended learning outcomes of the programme are met must be identified and stated in the programme specification.
- 27.2 Any formal period of study in industry must be credit-bearing and contribute to the award of the programme and consequently the degree classification (i.e. and therefore not pass/fail). The student will undertake units designated, run and assessed by the University of Bristol during their time in industry.
- 27.3 Schools should ensure that students are fully aware of the requirements of their University of Bristol programme of study in undertaking any period of study in industry prior to the student committing themselves to it.
- 27.4 Schools should establish with the placement provider in advance that the placement content will fulfil the student's learning needs and that it is appropriate.
- 27.5 Each School must maintain regular contact with the student and an industrial contact when undertaking a study in industry arrangement (as detailed in the University Guidelines on Student Placements), with the academic tutor maintaining support for the student (as referenced in the University policy on undergraduate student support).
- 27.6 The units associated with any study in industry must be set at the level of study appropriate to the programme and in alignment with the University's credit framework.
- 27.7 The study in industry should only be undertaken in the third year of a Bachelors or Integrated Masters programme. It is not expected that students will undertake an entire year of study away from the University as part of a three-year Bachelors programme.
- 27.8 An entire year of study in Industry will be weighted as 10% of the overall programme mark for the purposes of degree classification.
- 27.9 A student who completes and is awarded the credit for the year in industry but withdraws before completing the programme on which they are registered will receive an exit award.

## 28. Intercalation

- 28.1 'Intercalation' is defined as the circumstance in which a student takes up the opportunity to pause their study on a registered programme to study for a degree in a different programme of study. The student resumes, as normal, on their registered programme following the intercalation.
- 28.2 Only students registered on the following programmes at the University of Bristol are eligible to intercalate:
  - Dentistry (BDS)



- Medicine (MBChB)
- Veterinary Science (BVSc)

- 28.3 Only those taught degree programmes of the University of Bristol that have been specifically designated and approved can accept intercalating students. A register of the designated programmes will be held centrally.
- 28.4 Any programme that wishes to start to accept intercalating students should follow the normal procedure for a change to a programme, explicitly stating the rationale for accepting intercalating students in the approval documentation.
- 28.5 Requests for intercalation from students of the University will be at the discretion of both the director of the programme from which the student is intercalating (i.e. whether intercalation is suitable for a particular student) and the director of the programme onto which the student wishes to intercalate (i.e. whether a student meets the requirements of the programme and there is sufficient space to accommodate them).
- 28.6 Requests for intercalation from students of other institutions will be at the discretion of the programme director onto which the student wishes to intercalate.
- 28.7 A student may be permitted to intercalate onto a programme at a different institution provided there is a good academic reason for doing so.
- 28.8 Intercalation is normally undertaken subsequent to year 2 for entry onto the final year of a bachelors degree programme and subsequent to year 3 for entry onto a taught masters degree programme.
- 28.9 The maximum period of study for an intercalating programme is one academic year; intercalation will be completed within the same academic year that it has commenced unless a student suspends studies and/or due to other accepted extenuating circumstances.
- 28.10 As stated (see 24.9), credit can be used towards the award of a student's registered programme and the degree programme on which the student intercalates.
- 28.11 For the purposes of an intercalated bachelors degree, each year of study on the MBChB, BDS or BVSc programme shall each be deemed to be worth 120 credit points.
- 28.12 The final programme mark and degree classification of the Intercalated Degree, where appropriate, will be calculated purely on the marks achieved during the intercalated year of study (see annex 12).
- 28.13 The award of an intercalated bachelors degree will be conferred at the next graduation ceremony following successful completion of the programme, except for an intercalated taught postgraduate degree programme where the award will be conferred at the same time as the completion of the registered programme.
- 28.14 Whilst undertaking an intercalated programme, the student will be subject to the relevant regulations for that programme.
- 28.15 The Academic Personal Tutor, or equivalent, from the home programme will continue to provide support whilst a student from the University of Bristol is intercalating. An Academic Personal Tutor will be assigned from the school within which the intercalating programme is based, if the student is intercalating from another institution.

## 29. Processing and Recording Marks

### ***The unit mark***

- 29.1 The mark for each individual unit or element is calculated as the weighted average of the marks for each of its constituent assessments.
- 29.2 For the purposes of awarding credit for, or in non-modular programmes 'passing', an individual unit the mark for each unit is rounded to the nearest integer.
- 29.3 For the purposes of determining whether a must-pass element has been passed, the mark is rounded to the nearest integer.
- 29.4 For the purposes of determining progression from year to year, the actual unit mark is used to calculate the average year mark.
- 29.5 For the purposes of determining the final programme mark and degree classification, the actual unit mark is used to calculate the final programme mark.
- 29.6 The final unit mark should be displayed as the calculated rounded integer, unless required by a board of examiners for the purposes of calculating the year mark/taught component mark (so to determine progression) or the final programme mark (so to determine degree classification).
- 29.7 Students should receive the scores for each assessment, as well as their overall rounded unit mark.

### ***The year mark in undergraduate programmes***

- 29.8 For the purposes of determining progression, specifically for the application of 30.12 and 30.14.2, the overall mark achieved for the year in undergraduate programmes is calculated by averaging the weighted unit marks and rounding the result to the nearest integer.
- 29.9 Units that are pass/fail do not contribute towards the calculation of the year mark, but must be passed for the purposes of progression / completion.
- 29.10 The weighting given to the unit mark will correspond to the credit point value of the unit, e.g. the mark for a 20-credit point unit would be a 1/6 of the whole year mark, if the student has to achieve 120 credit points during the year.
- See annex 11 for an example of this calculation.

## 30. Student Progression and Completion - in Modular Programmes

A flow diagram of the options available for the progression of students on an undergraduate modular programme is available at annex 10.

- 30.1 For the purposes of **awarding credit** for an individual unit, the actual mark for each unit is rounded to the nearest integer.
- 30.2 For the purposes of **determining progression** from year to year, the actual unit mark is used to calculate the year mark. The result of the calculation of the overall average mark achieved for the year should be rounded to the nearest integer for the purpose of applying 30.13.
- 30.3 If a student fails to achieve the credit points, but there is evidence that their performance at the time of the assessment is likely to have been affected by extenuating circumstances, the provisions in section 19 'Extenuating Circumstances', will apply.

- 30.4 Schools will make suitable arrangements to implement the regulations for the award of credit for students who are studying a programme on a part-time basis such that the students are aware of the arrangements (e.g. the timing and status of any re-sits) and are not disadvantaged by the point in their studies in which their progression is formally considered.

***The award of credit for the purposes of progression in undergraduate modular programmes***

- 30.5 Students must achieve the pass mark for the unit (normally a mark of 40 out of 100 at levels 4-6 and 50 out of 100 at level 7) and meet any other designated criteria<sup>3</sup>, if applicable, to be awarded the associated credit. The criteria for the award of credit points, and an explanation of how the award of credit may be affected by criteria additional to marks in an examination or other formal assessment, must be explicitly described in the relevant unit specification and communicated to the students in advance of the commencement of their study of the unit.
- 30.6 By reaching a satisfactory standard, students thereby acquire the necessary credit points to progress, *except as specified below*.
- 30.7 A student who is not in the final year of their undergraduate programme nor registered at another institution but studying at Bristol, will be permitted a second attempt **in a unit** to achieve a satisfactory standard to progress (i.e. a re-sit) or to achieve any specified additional criteria, subject to 30.8, where the credit is not achieved at the first attempt. A re-sit should test those assessments in the unit that have been failed and need not be in the same form as the original assessment, as long as it tests the same learning outcomes and does not compromise any competence standards. A Board of Examiners, at its September meeting, may permit a re-sit to be undertaken in the next year of study as a second or third attempt (see 30.15.2). Please see: [www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding/) for information on applicable fees.
- A re-sit should normally be completed prior to progression to the following year of study, within the University's recognised examination periods, except as permitted under 30.15.2.
- 30.8 In order to be permitted a second attempt (i.e. re-sit) in any failed unit(s), undergraduate students must gain at least 40 credit points for the year of study by achieving the pass mark at the first attempt AND must have satisfied any additional criteria at the time they are considered by a board of examiners, or equivalent. Any such additional criteria must be specified in the programme and/or unit specification.
- 30.9 Students who are absent from an examination due to illness and who self-certificate, will be required to undertake the examination at the next scheduled time the examination is run, normally in the August / September assessment period. The form of the assessment should remain unchanged.
- 30.10 A student will not be permitted to undertake the assessment again where they have already fulfilled the criteria for the award of credit points for the unit. As detailed in section 19, a Board of Examiners must consider the effect of previous extenuating

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<sup>3</sup> Any criteria that are established for the award of credit in a unit should always explicitly link to its intended learning outcomes and may constitute: a binary measure of learning, specifically a competence or skill; a means of ensuring that students engage with collaborative learning activities, which depend on their contribution to fulfil a learning outcome for the unit; or a way of emphasising that a student's attendance at identified learning activities is required in order for them to engage with the learning outcomes.

circumstances, if applicable, on its decision-making (e.g. disregarding a unit mark for the purposes of classifying the degree).

Exceptionally, a Board of Examiners may permit a student who has achieved credit for a unit or units, despite being affected by extenuating circumstances, to repeat an entire year of study without penalty. This should normally only apply where: (i) the circumstance has been classified as 'severe' and has affected the student for a significant period of their studies; and (ii) the board judges that it is in the student's best interest and they are reasonably likely to improve their marks. Where such an exception is applied, the credit and the original mark for a unit that has been affected by extenuating circumstances should be voided prior to the student commencing the next academic year. Students should be informed of this course of action.

- 30.11 A student must acquire the necessary credit before progressing to the next year of study, except as permitted under 30.15.2. Where it has not been possible for the relevant board of examiners to consider the student's formal progress prior to a student commencing an industrial placement or a formal period of study at another institution as required by the programme structure, the Chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners may permit the student to register for the next year of study without the necessary credit, pending and subject to the decision of the board of examiners.
- 30.12 If a student does not achieve the criteria set out in 30.8, they will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award, if appropriate; unless there are validated extenuating circumstances (see section 19).
- 30.13 Notwithstanding 30.7, the relevant Board of Examiners will award credit to an undergraduate student to permit progression, despite failure to achieve a pass mark associated with taught unit(s) at the first attempt\* (i.e. a 'compensated pass'), provided conditions (a)-(f) are satisfied.

*\*when considering whether to apply compensation, the exam board should only consider the unit marks achieved at the first attempt within a year of study for a student*

- a) The total of the units failed in the year of study does not exceed 20 credit points.
- b) The relevant unit mark is within the specified range (35-39 out of 100 for level 4-6 units or 45-49 out of 100 for level 7 units) at the first attempt.
- c) The student has a year mark from all the taught units in the year of study of at least 40 out of 100.
- d) The student has not failed a unit that is deemed by the faculty or a professional body as being 'must pass' (see annex 1 for definition).
- e) Fulfils all other requirements for the award of credit, as stated in the programme and/or unit specification, such as:
  - *completion of practical work, e.g. field courses, laboratory sessions, language tuition, etc, deemed essential to understanding the academic discipline the student is studying;*
  - *a combination of coursework and practical work, supplemented by a record of attendance at teaching sessions, e.g. tutorials or laboratory sessions;*
  - *the acquisition of professional skills and attributes required in disciplines such as education, the health professions or the performing arts.*
- f) Satisfactorily completes any additional work deemed necessary, as determined by the relevant Board of Examiners, so as to enable the student to achieve the learning outcomes in the assessment(s) that they had failed.

30.14 Students who are permitted to progress as described in 30.13 (i.e. *notwithstanding a failed unit mark*) will be awarded and carry forward the actual unit mark they achieved at their first attempt (not the unit pass mark) and will only receive the credit for these unit/s upon final completion of the programme for which they are registered (i.e. at graduation).

30.15 If any student fails to achieve the unit pass mark following a re-sit of the unit or units equating to 20 credit points or less, they will be permitted a final opportunity to be re-assessed, either as part of a 'supplementary year', in order to obtain the necessary credit points to progress, or, where applicable, as part of the next year of study where the student has been permitted to 'conditionally progress'.

30.15.1 Students who are placed on a **supplementary year** will be registered on the unit(s) they have failed. A board of examiners has the discretion to: (i) permit students to undertake a replacement unit listed in their programme structure in lieu of a failed optional or open unit from outside of their honours subject as a third and final attempt, and (ii) require students to register for additional units, appropriate to their programme of study (see section 9 for information on the supplementary year). A student will only be permitted to undertake the supplementary year **once** for this reason during their programme of study.

30.15.2 Students may be permitted to **conditionally progress** to the next year of study and make up a credit deficit in identified programmes where they have failed a particular unit or units, provided conditions (a-f) are satisfied. Schools and faculties are not under any obligation to allow conditional progress on their programmes.

- a) The failed unit is not "must-pass", it is not fundamental to the programme objectives, being discontinued with no available alternative, and/or is not a prerequisite for units in the subsequent year.
- b) The total of the failed unit/s does not exceed twenty credit points.
- c) The student has achieved at least the year mark for progression in their programme.
- d) The student has not elected to undertake the supplementary year. Where applicable, conditional progression will be automatically applied by a board of examiners; however, a student may elect to instead take the supplementary year by them notifying their home school by the end of the second week of the first teaching block.
- e) The student has attempted (and failed) the relevant assessments in the unit at least once.
- f) The programme specification explicitly sets out where in the structure conditional progression may be employed.

Conditional progression will only be available as a potential outcome from the September Board of Examiners and subsequent to considering whether a failed unit may be compensated for the purposes of progression (see 30.13). Where permitted and the conditions are satisfied, a student will progress into the next year of study and, in addition to the requirements for that year of study, either:

- Re-take the failed unit/s (units may be undertaken on an exams-only basis where a student has already received and engaged in the teaching of the unit/s) or;
- Undertake a different unit/s in lieu of the one the student has failed by engaging with the teaching, as outlined in 30.15.1.

Please see: [www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/fees-funding/) for information on applicable fees.

The board of examiners will subsequently consider the award of credit for the outstanding failed unit/s before considering progression from the year of study into which they have conditionally progressed.

Where a student is unable to achieve the credit points for the failed unit on which their conditional progress is based, following three attempts, the board will not be able to consider the other units for the year and the student must withdraw from the university.

- 30.16 If any student fails to achieve the unit pass mark following a re-sit of the unit or units equating to more than 20 credit points, they will be required to withdraw from the programme, with an exit award, if appropriate.
- 30.17 For any unit which is passed by re-assessment, the student will receive the awarded mark for the re-assessment, however the unit mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark (40 out of 100 for units at levels 4, 5 and 6, and 50 out of 100 for units at level 7), even if the student achieves a higher mark in the re-assessment. The marks recorded when repeating the whole year or undertaking the supplementary year will also be capped at the minimum pass mark regardless of what marks are actually achieved, unless the student is being permitted to repeat the year or undertake a supplementary year “*as for the first time*” due to validated extenuating circumstances.

***The award of credit in the final year of undergraduate study for the purposes of completion***

- 30.18 Students must achieve the pass mark (normally a mark of 40 out of 100 at levels 4-6 and 50 out of 100 at level 7) and meet any criteria, as described in 30.5, if applicable for the unit, to be awarded the associated credit. By achieving this, students thereby acquire the necessary credit points in their final year to complete the programme of study, except as specified below:
- Re-assessment of units within the final year of undergraduate modular programmes is permitted where a failed unit is deemed to be ‘must-pass’ (e.g. for professional accreditation reasons), in which case the Faculty Board of Examiners will offer the student a final re-assessment opportunity. A re-sit should test those assessments in the unit that have been failed and need not be in the same form as the original assessment, as long as it tests the same learning outcomes and does not compromise any competence standards.
  - Students who are absent from an examination due to illness and who self-certificate, will be required to undertake the examination at the next scheduled time the examination is run, normally in the August / September assessment period. The form of the assessment should remain unchanged.
- 30.19 A Faculty Board of Examiners may choose to permit the award of 120 credit points for the final year of **undergraduate** study on the basis of a pass overall in assessments undertaken in the final year and achieving the pass mark for any must-pass unit, if applicable. This may only be enacted in respect of a particular programme or group of programmes, and not in respect of individual students, and not after the event. A Faculty Board of Examiners may, likewise, choose to:
- award 60 credit points in the final year of undergraduate study for the award of an Ordinary Degree on the basis of a pass overall in assessments from units comprising at least 60 credit points at level 6

- award 120 credit points for a full time year of study (or part time equivalent) in an Undergraduate Certificate or Diploma programme on the basis of a pass overall in the final assessment
- award 120 credit points on the basis of a pass overall in assessment in the relevant year of study in order for an exit award to be made.

30.20 If a student does not obtain the necessary credit points in units that contribute to the final programme mark and/or degree classification, the degree may not be awarded and the student will receive a lower award, as determined by the University's credit framework (see Section 3), unless the failure is due to certified illness or other validated extenuating circumstances.

30.21 If a student fails a must-pass unit in the final year of study following two attempts such that the intended degree cannot be awarded, but they otherwise attain a pass overall in assessments undertaken in the final year, then a Board of Examiners may award an alternative classified honours degree qualification, as set out in the relevant programme specification.

### ***Additional requirements for progression within an Integrated Masters Degree***

30.22 Students studying on integrated masters degrees will have the same progression requirements as students on other modular degree programmes at the end of the first year.

30.23 At the end of the second year of study, students on an Integrated Masters degree are required to achieve a year mark of 60 or more if their programme has been designated an 'advanced study' type or 50 or more if their programme has been designated as a 'professional' type of programme (see 25.21).

30.24 Students who do not qualify for progression on an Integrated Masters degree at the end of the second year will be automatically transferred onto an equivalent Bachelors degree provided that they meet the progression requirements for that programme.

30.25 At the end of the third-year students on an Integrated Masters degree are required to achieve a year mark of 50 or more out of 100.

30.26 When a third-year student does not qualify for progression or chooses to withdraw from an Integrated Masters programme at the end of the third year, the Faculty Board of Examiners may award an Ordinary Degree or an equivalent Honours degree (on the basis of the mark achieved at the first attempt if a re-sit of a unit was required) where the student has successfully met all the criteria, as described in the programme specification.

30.27 In order to progress within five-year Integrated Masters programme, students must achieve a year mark of 50 or more out of 100 in years 2, 3, and 4 in order to progress. Those students who are awarded 120 credit points for the year but do not achieve a year mark of 50 or more out of 100: will either be automatically transferred onto an equivalent Bachelors Honours degree or, following completion of Year 4, the Faculty Board of Examiners may award an Ordinary Degree or an equivalent Honours degree (on the basis of the mark achieved at the first attempt if a re-sit of a unit was required) where the student has successfully met all the criteria, as described in the programme specification.

30.28 Where a student is permitted to transfer onto the final year of an Integrated Masters programme, the school must be satisfied that they are capable of performing at the standard required for the Integrated Masters degree by having satisfied the same requirements for progression that are in place for Integrated Masters programmes.

30.29 Students on Integrated Masters degree programmes without a year abroad or in industry who wish to withdraw during their fourth year of study (fifth year for the five-year MEng programmes) should be considered by boards of examiners for the award of a Bachelors Honours degree in the usual manner.

30.30 Students who wish to withdraw from an Integrated Masters degree programme following the completion of the penultimate year of study and exit with a classified Bachelors Honours degree must inform their home school no later than the day prior to the meeting of the relevant faculty board of examiners where the Integrated Masters degree would otherwise have been awarded.

***Progression within a Bachelors Honours Degree to undertake the Study Abroad or Year in Industry***

30.31 In order to progress within an Honours Bachelors degree programme to the 'Study Abroad', 'Study in Continental Europe' or 'Study in Industry' year, students must satisfy any additional criteria (which may include a higher threshold for the year mark or a specified mark in a particular unit or units) as required by a specific programme in order to ensure that students are well equipped for this period. Any such additional criteria must be publicised to students at the outset of their studies.

***Progression within an Integrated Masters Degree to undertake the Study Abroad or Year in Industry***

30.32 In order to progress, within an Integrated Masters programme, onto the "Study Abroad" or "Year in Industry", students must achieve at least a year mark of 50 or more out of 100 in Year 1 and/or in Year 2 and must satisfy any additional criteria (which may include a higher threshold for the year mark or a specified mark in a particular unit or units) as required by a specific programme in order to ensure that students are well equipped for the year abroad or in industry. The location of the additional criteria must be publicised to students at the outset of their studies. Those students who are awarded 120 credit points for the year but do not achieve a year mark of 50 or more out of 100 and any additional other criteria will be automatically transferred onto the equivalent Bachelors Honours degree.

30.33 Students who wish to withdraw during the year following the year abroad or in industry will not normally be eligible for a Bachelors Honours degree as an exit award. Faculty boards of examiners may exceptionally award the appropriate Bachelors Honours degree to such students, where "exceptionally" shall mean:

1. the student has completed the third year of study satisfactorily and successfully taken any required assessments;
2. the student is incapable of continuing their studies owing to documented, severe extenuating circumstances;
3. the boards of examiners have sufficient confidence in the third-year results that they can satisfactorily award a classified degree;
4. the student has achieved the prescribed programme intended learning outcomes for the award.

**31. Student Progression and Completion - in Non-Modular Programmes (MB,ChB, BDS, BVSc (including Accelerated Graduate Entry))**

31.1 It is the responsibility of the relevant Faculty Board of Examiners to determine whether a student has satisfactorily completed a unit or element and in doing so has satisfied



the requirements for progression from year-to-year and for completion of the programme.

- 31.2 The teaching and learning in an entire year of study of the programmes is intentionally cohesive and complementary. On this basis students are required to demonstrate, and are subsequently judged upon, the ability to manage a workload at a standard appropriate to the time available. A component part of the teaching will not therefore be assessed in isolation (i.e. outside of the year of study in which it is taught). For this reason, students on the professional programmes will not normally be permitted to undertake the 'supplementary year'.
- 31.3 Where a standard set pass mark is used for a summative assessment, candidates' marks will be adjusted for consideration by Faculty Board of Examiners and for subsequent publication so that the overall pass mark equates to 50 on a percentage scale.
- 31.4 Where *extenuating circumstances may have affected the performance of a student in a summative assessment*, [Section 19 'Extenuating Circumstances'](#) will apply. Extenuating circumstances are only classified if a student requires consideration at the Board of Examiners.

### **Progression of Students**

- 31.5 Students must achieve a minimum standard by attaining the assigned pass mark for all units and any additional assessment (normally 50 on a percentage scale) and meet any additional criteria, if applicable, to progress to the next year of study.
- 31.6 Any additional criteria for progression must be explicitly described in the relevant programme standing orders and unit / programme specification, as appropriate, and communicated to the students in advance of the commencement of their study.
- 31.7 Detailed progression information is held by programme and year in the Standing Orders for the programme. Standing orders are approved annually by the Faculty Education Director and should normally be approved by June of the preceding academic year. Standing Orders may be presented to students via the Management of Marks document.
- 31.8 A student who does not achieve the criteria associated with the programme or a constituent unit(s), as specified in the programme's standing orders or regulations, will normally be permitted a second attempt to meet these criteria in order to progress to the next year of study.
- 31.9 Except for those competency-based assessments which may permit additional attempts, a student who fails to achieve the pass mark for any assessment, or to achieve the specified criteria, at the **second attempt** will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award, if appropriate, unless there are validated extenuating circumstances.
- If a Faculty Board of Examiners permits a student to repeat the whole year of the programme in response to validated extenuating circumstances, it may also apply supplementary conditions for progression.
- 31.10 A second attempt need not be in the same form as the original assessment, as long as it: tests the same learning outcomes, does not compromise any competence standards, and applies to the entire cohort of students who are undertaking the assessment.
- 31.11 Within any unit where a constituent assessment(s) is passed as a second attempt, the recorded mark for the unit will be capped at the minimum pass mark. Where a

student repeats the entire year as a second attempt, the recorded marks for all the units are capped at the minimum pass mark, even if the student had passed a unit at the first attempt.

## 32. Awards and Classification - in Modular Programmes

- 32.1 Classification is permitted on honours degree programmes; however, unless provision is made within this Code, non-degree undergraduate modular awards are not classified. These awards are made where a student achieves the credit points for them with an overall mark of 40 out of 100 or more.
- 32.2 Guidance for faculties on students who do not complete all the required assessment for honours classification in relation to Ordinance 18 is provided at annex 9.
- 32.3 No further regulations or rules will apply for the calculation of the degree classification **following** application of the common algorithm (i.e. the primary and secondary rule).
- 32.4 Rules which are inherent to the design of the programme, such as a requirement for the student to pass a project in order to graduate, must be approved and be described in the relevant programme specification, and be implemented **before** the algorithm is applied
- 32.5 Bands of marks for use in final degree classification in undergraduate modular programmes are as follows:

### ***All Faculties***

First Class Honours	70 and above
Second Class Honours, First Division	60-69
Second Class Honours, Second Division	50-59
Third Class Honours	40-49
Fail	39 and below

An Ordinary degree can be awarded if a student has successfully completed at least 300 credits with a minimum of 60 credits at level 6.

### ***Primary Rule for calculating the final programme mark and degree classification***

- 32.6 First year (undergraduate) marks will not contribute to the calculation of the final programme mark and/or degree classification. Additionally, units in any year of study that are pass/fail only will be disregarded in this calculation.
- 32.7 All units taken in the years of study that contribute to the final programme mark and/or degree classification will count towards the weighted average final mark. Where students are given exemption from units, due to prior learning, see annex 13.
- 32.8 The weightings apply to years of study, **not** to the level of the units taken by a student within the year.
- 32.9 The default position is that within each faculty a single weighting rule for the years of study will apply, unless a faculty is able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the University Education Committee, that more than one weighting rule is required because of the major differences between subjects within the faculty and/or professional body accreditation requirements. The agreed weightings for the programmes within each of the faculties are provided in annex 12.
- 32.10 Within each year of study the weighting given to the unit mark, in relation to the mean 'year mark', will correspond to the credit point value of the unit, e.g. the mark for a 20

credit point unit would be 1/6 of the whole year mark, if the student has to achieve 120 credit points during the year.

32.11 For the purposes of applying the primary and secondary rules, the final programme mark is calculated by averaging the weighted individual unit marks. The result of the calculation should then be rounded to the nearest integer. This must be done PRIOR to determining whether the final programme mark is within the classification boundary range, as defined in 32.12 and 32.13.

32.12 The classification boundary ranges for bachelors honours programmes are based on marks out of 100 and are:

First / 2.1	equal to or more than 68 but less than 70
2.1 / 2.2	equal to or more than 58 but less than 60
2.2 / Third	equal to or more than 48 but less than 50

If the final summative programme mark falls within the range of one of these classification boundaries, the secondary rule will apply.

32.13 The classification boundary ranges for integrated masters programmes are based on marks out of 100 and are:

First / 2.1	equal to or more than 68 but less than 70
2.1 / 2.2	equal to or more than 58 but less than 60

If the final summative programme mark falls within the range of one of these classification boundaries, the secondary rule will apply.

### **Secondary Rule**

32.14 If the final summative programme mark falls within the range of one of the classification boundaries, as set out in 32.12 and 32.13, the higher degree classification will only be awarded if 50% or more of the rounded individual unit marks, weighted by credit point value and year of study, which contribute to the degree classification are achieved at the higher class or classes, otherwise the lower class will be awarded.

32.15 It is the responsibility of the School Board of Examiners to consider and determine between classifications on the basis of the secondary rule.

## **33. Awards and Classification - in Non-Modular Programmes (MB,ChB, BDS, BVSc (including Accelerated Graduate Entry))**

33.1 The final programme mark is calculated by averaging the weighted individual unit marks. The result of the calculation of both the overall average mark achieved for the year and the final programme mark should be recorded to one decimal point.

33.2 If there is evidence that the performance of a student at the time of examination is likely to have been affected by extenuating circumstances, section 19 'extenuating circumstances', applies.

33.3 Requirements which are inherent to the design of the programme, such as the requirement for the student to pass a particular assessment or component in order to graduate, must be described in the relevant programme specification, and be implemented before these rules are applied.

33.4 The marks gained in all units within the approved programme structure that are undertaken by the student will contribute to the final programme mark. Where students are given exemption from units of the programme due to accredited prior learning,

including from other higher education institutions, marks previously gained for any such units will not contribute to the calculation of the final programme mark.

- 33.5 Unit marks will be weighted for any calculation of the year and the final programme mark, as described in the relevant programme handbook. Units or elements may also be weighted zero for this calculation. Students must be informed of any weighting in advance of commencement of the year of study.
- 33.6 Assessments which only test competencies on a pass/fail basis will not contribute to the unit mark and therefore will also not contribute to the year mark or the final programme mark.
- 33.7 The award of a degree in the non-modular professional programmes is determined by the final programme mark, as follows:
- |      |              |
|------|--------------|
| Pass | 50 and above |
| Fail | 49 and below |
- 33.8 The classification of a degree is determined by the final programme mark in relation to the overall performance in the cohort, as follows<sup>4</sup>:
- The top 10% of the student cohort on the programme will be awarded a degree with distinction;
  - The next 15% of the student cohort on the programme will be awarded a degree with merit;
  - All other students that have a final programme mark of 50 out of 100 or more will be awarded a professional degree. The rank of the remainder of students may be published, at the discretion of the relevant faculty Board of Examiners.
- 33.9 Where programmes decide to award distinctions or merits for individual units, the same method provided in 33.8 will apply.
- 33.10 No further rules will apply for the calculation of the final programme mark and the award of a degree with merit and distinction following application of these rules.

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<sup>4</sup> The professional programmes determine student performance primarily on the attainment of a threshold of competence. For this reason these degrees are not classified. However potential employers require the university to recognise excellence and the simplest, most transparent and justifiable approach is by ranking within a cohort of students. All three programmes have sufficient students each year to minimise the risk of students being disadvantaged by any year effect.

## C. TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES ONLY

### 34. Admission and Study

#### **Selection and admission**

34.1 Selection of students for taught postgraduate programmes must be in accordance with the University's Admissions Principles and Procedures for Postgraduate Taught Programmes: [www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/after-you-apply/policies/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/after-you-apply/policies/).

#### **Registration**

34.2 Students must register on their programmes within the first two weeks of teaching of the academic year. If a student is unable to register in that time, they will be required to suspend their studies until the following academic year or withdraw from the programme.

34.3 No student registered for a programme of full-time study leading to a qualification of the University of Bristol may study concurrently on a programme of full or part-time study leading to the award of a qualification at this or another higher education provider.

34.4 Students on some taught postgraduate programmes may be permitted to register initially for a postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate, subject to faculty approval.

34.5 For awards of the University of Bristol, except as specified below, credit points may only be used once and may not be used towards two or more taught awards of this University or of another higher education provider and this University. The exceptions are:

- a) where an award at one level may be subsumed into an award at a higher level;
- b) where a University award or award of another institution has independent standing as a professional qualification and is accredited by a professional body;

The use of credit or a lower award from this University towards an award of another institution is at the discretion of that awarding institution, including as part of articulation agreements where a partner institution might count the credit or qualification obtained at Bristol towards their own award.

#### **Period of study**

34.6 The period of study commences when the student is first registered for the degree programme. Students are expected to complete their programme within the specified normal period of study and must not exceed the maximum study period.

34.7 The maximum study period normally only applies to students who are undergoing re-assessment.

34.8 The following table shows the normal and maximum periods of study for taught postgraduate degrees. These periods of study include extensions but exclude suspensions of study. A student will normally only be able to take a supplementary year due to extenuating circumstances once during their programme of study.

Title of award	Student mode of attendance	Normal study period	Maximum study period
<b>Postgraduate Certificate</b> 60 credit points	Full-time	Not less than 15 weeks' study	6 months
	Part-time	6 months	12 months
	Part-time variable	Not applicable	Not more than three years
<b>Postgraduate Diploma</b> 120 credit points	Full-time	Not less than 31 weeks' study	12 months
	Part-time	6 months	24 months
	Part-time variable	Not applicable	Not more than three years
<b>Masters degree by intercalation</b> 180 credit points	Full-time	12 months	12 months
<b>Masters degree</b> 180 credit points	Full-time	12 months	24 months
	Part-time	24 months	36 months
	Part-time variable	Not applicable	Not more than five years*
<b>MA in Law</b> 240 credit points	Full-time	24 months	Not more than three years
	Part-time	4 years	Not more than five years
<b>MSc in Social Work</b> 300 credit points	Full-time	24 months	Not more than three years
<b>PGCE</b> (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) 60 credit points	Full-time	12 months	Not more than three years

*\*Not more than eight years study for part-time variable students on the MSc in Teaching and Learning for Health Professionals and the Master of Laws (LLM) by Advanced Study.*

*For the Postgraduate Dental Studies programme, the maximum period of study for a part-time variable mode of study is 24 months for the Certificate, 48 months for the Diploma and 72 months for the Masters degree.*

### **School Responsibilities**

34.9 Schools will ensure that:

- a) At the commencement of their period of study, students are given the opportunity to meet key teaching and support staff, and other students on the programme.
- b) Students are provided with induction/orientation information in electronic or paper format to include a detailed induction programme, a timetable and calendar of key

academic events. Students should also receive a copy of the University and Faculty Student Handbook or be directed to the online versions.

- c) Students receive appropriate handbooks (for the programme, unit/s and dissertation), outlining programme requirements and academic standards, contact details of key staff and their office hours/weekly availability and sources of academic and pastoral help and sources of general and skills training. Students should also be given access to general and discipline specific careers advice. Health and Safety training should be provided by schools as appropriate.
- d) Students on professional programmes receive information on any professional requirements, including any compulsory practical, clinical or professional placements and fitness to practice procedures. Additional professional and clinical skills and competency requirements will be specified in full in programme specifications.
- e) Teaching staff have expertise in the subject area and that students can interact with a range of appropriate teaching staff on their programme of study.
- f) The learning environment is suitable for a diverse student body, including disabled students, international students or students working in professional employment who do not often visit the University campus, whether they are studying full-time, part-time or on a part-time variable basis.
- g) Students are made aware of the facilities available to them during their studies (e.g. library, office/laboratory/workshop space), and of any requirements for their use. Students working remotely, including those 'writing up' their dissertation (or equivalent), should be given access to appropriate facilities and resources to support their study, including those available electronically.
- h) If a student is required to participate in a professional or industrial placement, the School will ensure that the student has access to appropriate facilities, information and support while on the placement.

### ***Student Entitlements***

34.10 Taught postgraduate students can expect:

- a) Information on tuition fees, registration, induction, the timetable and staff office hours/availability.
- b) Information on programme and unit content and requirements and how academic progress towards the award is monitored.
- c) Adequate opportunities to meet their personal tutor and/or programme director (as applicable), unit directors and dissertation supervisor(s) for informal and formal discussions about academic progress or pastoral matters.
- d) Information on the return of required written work, with formative feedback, within an agreed time scale (typically three weeks for full-time students, unless exceptional circumstances arise, in which case students will be informed of the deadline).
- e) Access to a learning infrastructure that supports their academic progress and their ability to complete the degree successfully within the required time period. Where relevant, details of appropriate language courses should be provided, bearing in mind the challenge of taking a language course while committed to a full-time programme of study
- f) Access to an appropriate learning environment, including a wider research environment, (in the University or collaborating institutions) within which there is

relevant and sufficient expertise and appropriate facilities available to support the programme of study.

- g) Information about the support and guidance available at School/Faculty/University level (e.g. student handbooks, student web pages), including information on complaints and appeals procedures and information on student representation procedures at School/ Faculty/University level and on student feedback opportunities

### ***Student Responsibilities***

34.11 Taught postgraduate students are expected to:

- a) Register with the University at the start of the academic year, ensuring that they are registered on the correct units with sufficient credit points for the programme.
- b) Pay the required tuition fee and ensure that they have the necessary financial support to enable completion of the programme
- c) Take responsibility for their own personal and professional development and academic progress, making the most of those learning opportunities that will enhance their capacity for independent and 'self-directed' learning.
- d) Meet the University's requirements for good academic conduct, including timely submission of assessed work by the set deadline, attending at meetings with unit directors and dissertation supervisor(s) as required, attend lectures, seminars and practical sessions regularly and take an active part in the programme of study.
- e) Maintain effective working relationships with teaching staff (programme director, personal tutor, unit directors, dissertation supervisor) and other students, treating all with respect and consideration. Students on professionally-recognised vocational programmes are additionally expected to maintain standards of conduct commensurate with professional practice standards.
- f) Maintain academic integrity, acknowledging fully the work of others in their coursework and assessed work, and be familiar with the referencing conventions of the discipline or programme, so that their work is free from plagiarism.
- g) Notify the University of any disability, extenuating circumstance or support needs that may affect their study or performance in assessments, in line with these Regulations and Code of Practice.
- h) Notify the University of changes in their personal information (teaching time/home addresses, telephone numbers) immediately by updating their personal details online at <https://www.bris.ac.uk/studentinfo/>.
- i) Notify their programme director of any potential change in circumstance (requests for a change in mode of attendance, suspension of study, resumption of study, extension of study, programme transfer or withdrawal) in good time.
- j) Be familiar with, and comply with, University Regulations and Guidelines including: these Regulations and Code of Practice, relevant programme regulations, the Rules and Regulations for Students (including the University's Intellectual Property Policy for Students: [www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/student-rules-regs/)) and the Examination Regulations (including sections on plagiarism and cheating).
- k) Be familiar with relevant University rules on health and safety, data protection, research ethics and confidentiality and the norms of good research practice applicable to their disciplinary area.



- l) International students with visa / immigration queries must only discuss these with the specially trained staff based in Student Visa Services. These staff can also provide general support and guidance to international students.

### ***Monitoring of the progress of taught postgraduate students***

- 34.12 Faculties should monitor the progress of taught postgraduate students at boards of examiners meetings and as part of its internal review processes.
- 34.13 The University expects informal monitoring of student progress within 2 - 3 months of initial registration. Practice may vary according to the discipline, student cohort or mode of study.
- 34.14 Monitoring of student progress normally includes monitoring of attendance on units and performance in seminars and may also include informal evaluations of a student's progress in a unit/programme.
- 34.15 Informal reviews of student progress will help ensure that the student is in a position to overcome practical or academic hurdles to progress and will enable the student to discuss any concerns about progress with the unit/dissertation supervisor. The student should see and comment on any written report made about their progress.
- 34.16 All part-time variable students, defined here as students on non-standard professional programmes who are studying part-time, typically less than 0.5 FTE\*, must be registered for, and study, a minimum of one unit per academic year. The programme director and faculty graduate education director must approve any exceptional cases where a student is unable to meet this requirement. A student who does not study at least one unit per year and who does not have an approved exemption will be required to withdraw from their studies.
- (\*This regulation does not apply to taught postgraduate students who are designated *part-time variable* purely because they are undertaking a Supplementary Year.)
- 34.17 Part-time variable students should receive timely feedback on their progress in each unit from the unit director, normally in advance of commencing study on another unit.

### ***The Dissertation***

- 34.18 For most postgraduate Masters awards, an extended piece of work, such as a dissertation or project, is required. Postgraduate Masters awards with an enhanced research component normally require dissertation/s worth 90 to 120 credit points. Dissertation requirements are outlined in annex 14 'Dissertations in Taught Postgraduate Programmes' and in individual programme specifications.
- 34.19 The dissertation / research project must normally be submitted by 31 August, or the next working day if it falls on a weekend or bank holiday. Faculties may alter this deadline date for part-time or professional Masters programmes. Information on submission procedures and submission deadlines are published in faculty and/or school handbooks.
- 34.20 The dissertation must be a student's own work. A student may not include in any dissertation (or equivalent), material previously submitted and approved for an award of a degree at this or any other university.

#### **34.21 School responsibilities concerning the dissertation:**

- a) To assign each student a dissertation supervisor by the start of the dissertation.
- b) To provide students with information and guidance on the dissertation process. Students may receive information in a school handbook, in a dissertation workshop, seminar, work session or via Blackboard.
- c) To inform students of how formative feedback will be provided on the draft section(s) of the dissertation.
- d) To provide students with relevant legal and regulatory information and guidance e.g. health and safety, research ethics, copyright, data protection, plagiarism, criminal records bureau check procedures.
- e) If a student's research requires a period working away from the University, the School should ensure that appropriate supervisory/personal tutor arrangements, understood by the student, are in place to cover these periods.
- f) To inform students of the independent sources of help/advice that are available should a problem arise during the dissertation process, e.g. programme director, personal tutor.
- g) In schools where a dissertation or research project has a placement element or a student spends time at a company location, the dissertation supervisor and the safety officer will seek to ensure student safety by ensuring that the company has a safety code of practice.

#### **34.22 Dissertation supervisor's responsibilities**

- a) To be aware of and understand University policies and procedures.
- b) To be knowledgeable about the general or specific research area of the student's dissertation so as to provide guidance on the nature of the dissertation and the standard of work expected.
- c) To advise on the planning of the dissertation; to discuss the timetable and dates for completion of different stages.
- d) To advise the student on training necessary for completion of the dissertation, e.g. statistical or software courses which may include referral to other sources of help and advice. To advise on techniques, research methods, research ethics and other relevant issues (e.g. criminal records check procedures, intellectual property), and to encourage the student to become aware of recent developments in the research area.
- e) To supervise and maintain contact with the student through meetings, email or telephone contact where appropriate (e.g. when a student is working on a placement away from Bristol) as detailed in school handbooks.
- f) To propose adequate arrangements for supervision of students during study leave (or unavoidable absence) to the Programme Director or Head of School, as applicable.
- g) The dissertation supervisor will not proof-read or edit the work. In programmes where a specified proportion of the draft dissertation may be read by the dissertation supervisor, they may comment on the following as applicable: dissertation or report structure, content of sections, research sources and methodology, referencing and style.
- h) Where re-assessment of the dissertation is permitted by the Board of Examiners, the dissertation supervisor will ensure that the student understands the feedback given by the examiners and knows what is required for re-submission. The student can normally expect at least one meeting with their supervisor to clarify these points and

can expect the supervisor to read and comment on one revised draft prior to re-submission.

#### **34.23 Student's responsibilities during the dissertation**

- a) To agree a suitable dissertation topic with their dissertation supervisor and to work on a research plan in consultation with that supervisor.
- b) To attend dissertation workshops and seminars (where provided) and be familiar with relevant school information on the dissertation process.
- c) To agree a schedule of meetings with their dissertation supervisor at the start of the process, initiate meetings, attend all scheduled meetings and presentations and remain in contact during the period of the dissertation.
- d) To be responsible for their own progress with the dissertation, keeping their dissertation supervisor informed of their overall progress, raising any problems they are having with the dissertation with their dissertation supervisor at the earliest opportunity. To work on their dissertation taking account of advice and guidance and submit work by set deadlines.
- e) To ensure that ethical or statutory checks are carried out early in the dissertation process so that the progress of their research is not delayed. Criminal records bureau, research ethics or intellectual property checks or approval may take weeks/months to complete.
- f) Where required by the school, to provide the dissertation supervisor with a draft section of the dissertation by the specified deadline, in accordance with school dissertation guidelines.
- g) To be responsible for the quality and standard of their own work. They should proof-read the final draft, ensure it is legible and check that both citation and referencing have been done to the required standard.
- h) To submit the dissertation within the normal study period for the programme
- i) Where the Board of Examiners permits re-assessment of the dissertation, the student must take account of the feedback from examiners to improve the re-submitted work.

#### ***Feedback opportunities***

34.24 Taught postgraduates may provide feedback on their experiences through their student representatives on school staff/student liaison committees, through 'end of programme' and unit questionnaires as well as providing their views during School Reviews. They may express their views through student representatives on relevant faculty committees and by providing feedback on their experiences to the University Quality Team. At University level, there are student representatives on the Learning and Teaching Committee, University Education Committee, Senate, Student Experience Committee and the Board of Trustees.

### **35. Programme Structure and Design**

35.1 Taught postgraduate programmes may sit wholly within a discipline, school or faculty, or may cross discipline, school or faculty boundaries.

## Master of Research (MRes)

- 35.2 The MRes is a taught postgraduate degree. Its main aim is to provide a structured research training programme which can act as a foundation for doctoral study or for a research career outside academia. It may also be used to provide an exit award from a doctoral programme which includes a taught component.
- 35.3 An MRes will comprise 180 credit points, and include a research component of between 60 and 120 credit points at level 7.
- 35.4 All MRes programmes will provide an exit award of a Postgraduate Certificate (with the attainment of 60 credit points). If the structure of the taught component permits, MRes programmes will also provide an exit award of a Postgraduate Diploma (with the attainment of 120 credit points).
- 35.5 Successful completion of the taught component of an MRes is normally required for progression to the research component. The relevant Board of Examiners may permit a student to start the research component before the assessment of the taught component is complete.

## 36. Extension of Study

- 36.1 Extensions are used where exceptional circumstances necessitate extension of the normal period of study in order to complete the dissertation or equivalent. An agreed extension may involve the payment of additional fees.
- 36.2 An extension of study will only be granted where there are good grounds, supporting documentation (e.g. a medical note from a GP) and the request is made in accordance with the periods of time outlined in 36.4 and 36.5. There will need to be clear evidence of satisfactory progress for an extension request to be granted.
- 36.3 Good grounds for an extension of study may include: serious and persistent health problems, significant bereavement or additional sole caring responsibilities, serious financial problems, mandatory military service or where a part-time student's employment pattern has changed.
- 36.4 One or more extensions of study totalling not more than 12 months may be requested by a student and authorised by the graduate Education Director. The request should be made at least two weeks prior to the end of the period of study.
- 36.5 An extension of study for any period that takes the accumulative total over 12 months will also require the approval of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education). The request should be made at least four weeks prior to the end date of the original period of extension.
- 36.6 Requests should be made on the relevant form and be accompanied by any supporting documentation, such as medical evidence or correspondence. Requests should be sent initially to the Programme Director.
- 36.7 The Programme Director should forward written support for the extension to the relevant Faculty Education Director and certify that the student has made satisfactory progress so far. There may be additional rules on extensions from a funding body. It is the responsibility of the student to confirm that arrangements and approval for the extension have been secured with any funding body that is involved.
- 36.8 Any change to student status, such as an extension of study, will affect immigration status in the UK. The University is required to report any changes in status to the Home Office. Student Visa Services provides guidance and advice to visa-holding

students who are seeking an extension of study. Please see the website for further information: [www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/).

### 37. Processing and Recording Marks

#### ***The unit mark***

- 37.1 The mark for each individual unit is calculated as the weighted average of the marks for each of its constituent assessments.
- 37.2 For the purposes of awarding credit for an individual unit, the mark for each unit is rounded to the nearest integer.
- 37.3 For the purposes of determining progression from the taught component to the dissertation stage, the actual unit mark is used to calculate the taught component mark.
- 37.4 The final unit mark should be displayed as the calculated rounded integer, unless required by a board of examiners for the purposes of calculating the taught component mark so to determine progression or classification.
- 37.5 Students should receive the scores for each assessment, as well as their overall rounded unit mark.

#### ***The taught component mark***

- 37.6 For the purposes of determining progression from the taught component to the dissertation stage, specifically the application of 38.13 and classification, the overall mark achieved for the taught component is calculated by averaging the weighted unit marks and rounding the result to the nearest integer.
- 37.7 Units that are pass/fail will not contribute towards the calculation of the taught component mark, but must be passed for the purposes of progression / completion.
- 37.8 The weighting given to the unit mark will correspond to the credit point value of the unit, e.g. the mark for a 20-credit point unit would be 1/6 of the taught component mark, if the student must achieve 120 credit points.
- See annex 11 for an example of this calculation.
- 37.9 Progression to the dissertation stage is normally only permitted on the satisfactory completion of the taught component. There is no compensation between the taught component and the dissertation (i.e. a mark in the taught component cannot compensate for a lower mark in the dissertation, and vice versa). The dissertation may be suspended at the discretion of the relevant Board of Examiners if the result from the taught component is unsatisfactory.

### 38. Student Progression and Completion

- 38.1 For the purposes of **awarding credit** for an individual unit, the actual mark for each unit is rounded to the nearest integer.
- 38.2 For the purposes of **determining progression** from the taught to the dissertation component, the unit mark is used to calculate the taught component mark. The result of the calculation of the overall average mark achieved for the taught component should be rounded to the nearest integer for the purpose of applying 38.13.
- 38.3 If a student fails to achieve the credit points, but there is evidence that their performance at the time of the examination is likely to have been affected by

extenuating circumstances, the provisions in section 19 'Extenuating Circumstances' will apply.

38.4 Schools will make suitable arrangements to implement the regulations for the award of credit for students who are studying a programme on a part-time basis such that the students are aware of the arrangements (e.g. the timing and status of any re-sits) and are not disadvantaged by the point in their studies in which their progression is formally considered.

38.5 Designated programmes, in which the taught component runs in parallel with the dissertation (i.e. a student is allocated and undertakes a research project early in their study), may not have a progression point between the taught component and the dissertation stage. Where this is the case, a formal consideration as to whether the student is likely to succeed on the basis of marks obtained in taught units should instead take place at a point designated by the programme, using regulation 38.9 as a basis for this consideration.

***The award of credit for the purposes of progression or completion of award in taught postgraduate modular programmes***

38.6 Students must achieve the pass mark for the unit (normally a mark of 40 out of 100 at levels 4-6 and 50 out of 100 at level 7) and meet any additional criteria, if applicable, to be awarded the associated credit. The criteria for the award of credit points, and an explanation of how the award of credit may be affected by criteria additional to marks in an examination or other formal assessment, must be explicitly described in the relevant unit specification and communicated to the students in advance of the commencement of their study of the unit.

38.7 By reaching a satisfactory standard, students thereby acquire the necessary credit points to progress, *except as specified below*.

38.8 A student who is not awarded the credit for a unit (with the exception of a dissertation unit, see 38.19) may be permitted a second attempt to achieve a satisfactory standard to progress (i.e. a 're-sit') or to achieve any specified additional criteria. A re-sit should test those assessments in the unit that have been failed and need not be in the same form as the original assessment, as long as it tests the same learning outcomes and does not compromise any competence standards.

38.9 In order to be permitted a second attempt (i.e. re-sit) in any failed unit(s), taught postgraduate students must gain at least half of the credit points in the taught component by achieving the pass mark at the first attempt AND must have satisfied any additional criteria at the time they are considered by the progression board, or equivalent.

38.10 Students who are absent from an examination due to illness and who self-certificate, will be required to undertake the examination at the next scheduled time the examination is run, normally in the August / September assessment period. The form of the assessment should remain unchanged.

38.11 A student will not be permitted to undertake an assessment again where they have already fulfilled the criteria for the award of credit points for the unit. As detailed in section 19, a Board of Examiners must consider the effect of previous extenuating circumstances, if applicable, on its decision-making (e.g. progression from the taught component).

38.12 A student must acquire the necessary credit before progressing to the next component of study. Where a postgraduate taught programme forms the taught component of a doctoral programme, it may have a bespoke programme structure

and progression within the taught component may operate differently. Where it has not been possible for the relevant board of examiners to consider the student's formal progress prior to the commencement of the next component, the Chair of the Faculty Board of Examiners may permit the student to register for the next component without the necessary credit, pending and subject to the decision of the board of examiners.

38.13 If a student does not achieve the criteria set out in 38.9, they will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award, if appropriate; unless there are validated extenuating circumstances (see section 19). Faculties have discretionary authority to permit postgraduate students who have failed part, or all, of the taught component to re-sit for the purposes of achieving an exit award.

38.14 Notwithstanding 38.9, under the conditions (a) - (f) specified below the relevant Board of Examiners will apply a compensation rule at the first or the second attempt in order to award credit for marginally failed taught units to permit progression or completion.

a) Either, where the total of the taught credit points failed in the taught component does not exceed the normal permitted maximum value of a sixth of the total credit points for the award (typically, 30 credit points for a 180 credit point Masters programme, 20 credit points for a 120 credit point Diploma and 10 credit points for a 60 credit point Certificate)

Or, for programmes where the credit value of each and every unit in the taught component exceeds the maximum permitted value, as defined above, the total of the credit points failed does not exceed the value of the taught unit with the lowest amount of credit points.

b) The relevant unit mark is within the specified range (35-39 out of 100 for level 4-6 units or 45-49 out of 100 for level 7 units).

c) The student has a taught component mark of at least 50 out of 100.

d) The student has not failed a unit that is deemed by the faculty or a professional body as being 'must pass' (see annex 1 for definition).

e) Fulfils all other requirements for the award of credit, as stated in the programme and/or unit specification, such as:

- *completion of practical work, e.g. field courses, laboratory sessions, language tuition, etc, deemed essential to understanding the academic discipline the student is studying;*
- *a combination of coursework and practical work, supplemented by a record of attendance at teaching sessions, e.g. tutorials or laboratory sessions;*
- *the acquisition of professional skills and attributes required in disciplines such as education, the health professions or the performing arts.*

f) Satisfactorily completes any additional work deemed necessary, as determined by the relevant Board of Examiners, so as to enable the student to achieve the learning outcomes in the assessment(s) that they had failed.

38.15 Students who are permitted to progress as described in 38.14 (i.e. *notwithstanding a failed unit mark*) will be awarded and carry forward the actual unit mark they achieved at the attempt where the compensation was applied (not the unit pass mark) and will only receive the credit for these unit/s upon final completion of the programme for which they are registered (i.e. at graduation).

38.16 If any student fails to satisfy the conditions specified in 38.14, such that compensation cannot be applied and the student cannot progress following a re-sit of the unit, they will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award, if appropriate, or exceptionally, the relevant faculty Board of Examiners may permit a final opportunity to be re-assessed, normally as part of a 'supplementary year', in order to obtain the necessary credit points to progress.

A student will only be permitted to undertake the supplementary year **once** for this reason during their programme of study. Students who are placed on a supplementary year will normally be registered on the units they have failed. A board of examiners has the discretion to: (i) permit students to undertake a replacement unit listed in their programme structure in lieu of a failed optional or open unit from outside of their honours subject as a third and final attempt, and (ii) require students to register for additional units, appropriate to their programme of study (guidance on the supplementary year is available at section 9).

38.17 For any unit which is passed by re-assessment, the student will receive the awarded mark for the re-assessment, however the unit mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark (40 out of 100 for units at levels 4, 5 and 6, and 50 out of 100 for units at level 7), even if the student achieves a higher mark in the re-assessment. The marks recorded when repeating the whole year or undertaking the supplementary year will also be capped at the minimum pass mark regardless of what marks are actually achieved, unless the student is being permitted to repeat the year or undertake a supplementary year "as for the first time" due to validated extenuating circumstances.

#### ***Award of credit for the dissertation in taught postgraduate programmes***

*See also section 39 with regards to the 'taught component mark' and annex 14 for 'Dissertations in Taught Postgraduate Programmes'.*

38.18 Students must achieve the pass mark for the dissertation to be awarded the associated credit; by *reaching a satisfactory standard*, students thereby acquire the necessary credit points to complete the programme of study, *except as specified over the page*.

38.19 Where a student has achieved a near-pass mark (45 or over but less than 50 out of 100 or equivalent on the 0-20 point scale) for the dissertation and, in addition, the examiners recommend that it is suitable for re-assessment, the relevant Board of Examiners may decide to permit the student to re-submit the dissertation, or equivalent.

38.20 Re-submission of the dissertation where the student has achieved a mark less than 45 out of 100 will be permitted *where failure is due to validated extenuating circumstances* (see section 19).

38.21 The recorded mark for any re-submitted dissertation will be *capped at the minimum pass mark* (50 out of 100) even if the student achieves a higher level of attainment in the re-assessment, except that where there is good cause for the initial failure (validated extenuating circumstances) the dissertation may be re-submitted "as though for the first time" and the mark achieved need not be capped.

38.22 Re-submission of the dissertation must normally be made within 3 months of the student being notified by the faculty Board of Examiners of its decision (and within 6 months for part-time students and 12 months for part-time variable students).

38.23 Where re-assessment of the dissertation is not permitted the student may be awarded a postgraduate diploma, if appropriate, by the relevant Board of Examiners, subject to the satisfactory accumulation of credit points. Whenever a Board decides



that re-submission of the dissertation is not permitted, the reason(s) must be clearly documented in the meeting minutes.

### 39. Awards: Taught Postgraduate Modular Programmes

- 39.1 The taught component mark is calculated by averaging the relevant weighted individual unit marks. The result of the calculation should then be rounded to the nearest integer.
- 39.2 The weighting of each unit mark, in calculating the 'taught component mark', will correspond to the credit point value of the unit. See annex 11 for an example of how to do this calculation.
- 39.3 The dissertation mark should be rounded to the nearest integer, where applicable.
- 39.4 An award with Merit or Distinction is permitted for postgraduate taught masters, diplomas and certificates, where these are specifically named entry-level qualifications.

An award with Merit or Distinction is not permitted for exit awards where students are required to exit the programme on academic grounds.

An exit award with Merit or Distinction may be permitted where students leave their intended programme because of exceptional circumstances.

- 39.5 The classification of the award in relation to the overall taught component mark and the dissertation mark is as follows:

Award with Distinction	at least 65 out of 100 for the taught component overall and, for Masters awards, at least 70 out of 100 for the dissertation. Faculties retain discretion to increase these thresholds*.
Award with Merit	at least 60 out of 100 for the taught component overall and, for masters awards, at least 60 out of 100 for the dissertation. Faculties retain discretion to increase these thresholds*.
Pass	at least 50 out of 100 for the taught component overall and, for Masters awards, at least 50 out of 100 for the dissertation.
Fail	49 or below out of 100 for the taught component overall or, where relevant, 49 or below out of 100 for the dissertation.

*\* Any higher threshold for classification should be detailed in the relevant student handbook*

#### **Exceptions**

- i. Where applicable, the classification of the award for programmes using the 5-point (A-E) scale should be reached by using a fixed mid-point for each grade where A = 75, B = 65 and C = 55. The same boundaries as in 39.5 will apply.
- ii. See annex 2 for the classification of degrees in the MA in Law

Amendments for 2020-21: approved by University Education Committee, May and June 2020