

REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE ASSESSMENT  
AND PROGRESSION OF STUDENTS ON TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

2010/11

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REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE  
ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESSION OF STUDENTS ON TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

## Introduction

### 1 Background to the Code

- 1.1. These Regulations and Code of Practice ('the Code') summarise the University's expectations for the conduct of assessment and progression in undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. The academic standards for taught postgraduate awards are set out fully in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes*, which is referred to at various points in this Code. For information on the assessment of research students please see the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*: [www.bris.ac.uk/esu/pg/policy/cop-research-degrees.html](http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/pg/policy/cop-research-degrees.html).
- 1.2. This Code incorporates and supersedes all previous and existing assessment and progression policy and some assessment regulations, so that all guidance, regulation and information on assessment and progression are contained in one document, together with associated annexes.
- 1.3. The University undertook a review of its degree classification procedures during 2008-10 with the aim of implementing a coherent, transparent and consistent model for degree classification that applied across the whole university. A number of proposals arising from the review were approved by Senate in 2009-10 and are now included in this Code. It is intended that a further set of proposals, focussing upon a common set of rules for progression and the award of credit and establishing a common marking scale, will be incorporated into the Code following final approval; coming into effect for the start of the 2011-12 academic year.
- 1.4. The *Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations and Official Record* provide the formal examination requirements for all programmes.
- 1.5. Regulations are indicated by boxed text within the Code, and may not be varied. Other aspects of the Code must also be followed, although it is acknowledged that there may sometimes be good reason to need depart from the best practice arising from the precise nature of the learning outcomes, assessment methods and resource limitations that exist at school level. Any departures from the best practice outlined in the Code must be approved by the relevant undergraduate or graduate Education Director and must be in accordance with faculty policy. Where appropriate, the Working Group of Undergraduate Deans or the University Graduate Studies Committee and/or the relevant faculty committees may be consulted. University and faculty committees must aim for consistency of practice University-wide, making decisions that take account of the spirit of the Code.
- 1.6. It is the responsibility of each Faculty Quality Assurance Team (FQAT) supported by the Education Director and Dean of the faculty, as appropriate, to work closely with schools to implement University and faculty assessment and progression policies and procedures. The FQAT role includes making annual reports to the faculty board or other designated faculty committee, highlighting issues for consideration and good practice for dissemination.
- 1.7. Assessment and progression procedures should be transparent for all of the participants, from students to external examiners. All internal and external examiners should ensure that they are fully informed about University, faculty and school assessment procedures.

#### **The definition of assessment**

- 1.8. **Assessment** is a generic term for a set of processes that measure students' learning, their skills and their understanding; though there is an important distinction between formative,

summative and diagnostic purposes:

**Assessment for formative purposes:** enables the learner to obtain feedback on his/her progress towards meeting stated objectives (learning outcomes) and reviewing goals.

**Assessment for summative purposes:** provides the means whereby a clear statement of achievement or failure can be made in respect of a student's performance in relation to stated objectives.

**Assessment for diagnostic purposes:** enables attributes or skills to be identified in the learner that suggest appropriate pathways of study, or identifies learning difficulties that require support and resolution.

The Code relates to all the above forms of assessment, unless otherwise specified.

1.9. Assessment is at the centre of the learning experience for students and therefore serves many purposes, including:

- enabling students to obtain feedback on the quality of their learning;
- providing a means for measuring and comparing student achievement;
- enabling students to progress or to receive a licence to practise; and
- giving staff an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and consistency of practice.

Assessment methods and their application are integral to the interdependent curriculum design/teaching and learning/assessment cycle and should reflect the intended learning outcomes at all stages of the programme. Staff should be aware of the impact that assessment has in shaping students' dispositions towards learning, their understanding of goals and their motivation. In view of the value of different types of assessment for the student learning process, it is essential that assessment methods and procedures are carefully planned to reflect intended learning outcomes. In particular, staff need to consider carefully which assessment method is most appropriate for evaluating student performance in a chosen element or unit, i.e. whether it will enable students to demonstrate that they have achieved, or exceeded, the intended learning outcomes.

## 2 Principles for establishing taught programmes

- 2.1 Control over entry to any programme or unit rests with faculties (programmes) and schools (units). This includes the evaluation and acceptance of student transfers from other institutions and internally within the University.
- 2.2 Each degree programme is the responsibility of the relevant faculty, subject to approval of Senate.
- 2.3 All new and existing undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes, with the exception of the professional programmes in dentistry, medicine and veterinary science, must be fully modular in structure.
- 2.4 Undergraduate programmes may be a single honours unitary degree or a joint honours 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.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Faculties must adhere to the established procedures for the approval of named degree programmes.
- 2.7 Faculties and schools must specify the constituent units, as well as other pre- and co-requisites, for all existing and any new programmes in the programme specification.
- 2.8 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.

- 2.9 For each joint honours programme, one of the contributing schools must own the programme and apply the relevant regulations as set out in this policy. For programmes that span faculties the programme committee must decide the 'home' school, and therefore faculty ownership, guided by the balance of the programme content and emphasis.

### ***Principles of the programme structure***

2.10 The modular structure of any programme should:

- 2.10.1 permit flexibility in the choice of units across school, faculty and institutional boundaries to academic advantage, enabling students to exercise a measure of choice in their own curricula;
- 2.10.2 facilitate new interdisciplinary programmes/units;
- 2.10.3 safeguard the existence of, and the choice to take, coherent, specialist degree programmes;
- 2.10.4 facilitate access for non-traditional students;
- 2.10.5 permit University of Bristol students to use credits gained at the University towards a degree in another university;
- 2.10.6 within the constraints on double counting, described in points 12 and 13 of the General Regulations for First Degree Programmes in Modular Form, allow for credit transfer to permit University of Bristol students to use credits in a period of study in another university towards their Bristol degree; allow students from other universities to use the credits they bring with them towards a University of Bristol degree, subject to the acceptability of individual students; and allow students from elsewhere to use credits gained in a period of study in the University of Bristol towards a degree in their own university (see the University's Guidelines on the Accreditation of Prior Learning for Taught Programmes: [www.bris.ac.uk/esu/facultyadvice/policy/aplguidelines.html](http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/facultyadvice/policy/aplguidelines.html));
- 2.10.7 offer the opportunity for students who do not complete a full programme of study at the University to be provided with tangible evidence that they have successfully completed a piece of work within an accepted curricular structure.

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

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 Units of more than 60 credit points to accommodate projects or dissertations are permitted in postgraduate taught programmes, as prescribed in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes*.
- 2.13 As the University follows a two teaching block (12, 12 + 6 pattern for the teaching year), faculties and schools must arrange units so the whole curriculum year of any programme can be divided into two parts. A unit may only be scheduled to run outside of this structure, including running over the full academic year, where there are good pedagogic reasons to do so, subject to approval by Education Committee. Units designed solely to contribute to postgraduate programmes may run outside this structure, subject to approval by Education Committee.

### ***Levels of study***

- 2.14 To enable credit transfer both internally and externally, the levels of credit below have been identified.

- Level 3 units may be considered as alternatives to A levels and they are normally pre-requisites to Level 4 units and feature in pathway programmes.
- Level 4 units are normally taken as part of a first year of a programme.
- Level 5 units are normally taken as part of a second, third or final year of a programme.
- Level 6 units are normally taken as part of a third or final year of a programme.
- Level 7 units are normally taken as part of the final year of a masters or integrated masters programmes or the year abroad.

### **Student choice** (*under review during 2010-2011*)

- 2.15 All full time-students on undergraduate degree programmes will normally have free choice in units worth 40 credit points. Schools wishing to permit students “free choice” in units worth more than a total of 40 credit points may do so.
- 2.16 Faculties and schools will determine the point during a student's career at which the element of free choice can be taken. It is good practice for schools to offer tutorial advice and guidance to students seeking to take particular options, although it is the student's decision whether or not to take the advice offered.
- 2.17 The availability of any particular unit is subject to practical constraints such as space in lecture rooms/labs/seminar rooms and timetabling problems and also to academic constraints such as co- and pre-requisites. But, subject to those constraints, students have the right to seek to be able to take a unit or units of their choice. Students will not have a right to take any particular unit.
- 2.18 Students are not required to use their "free choice" units to take subjects outside their home school(s). If they wish, and subject to the practical constraints described in 2.17 above, they can take the 40 credit points set aside for free choice in their honours subject(s).

## **Forms and Conduct of Assessment**

### **3 Types of assessment and setting assessment tasks for summative purposes**

- 3.1 Annex 2 summarises the assessment methods that might be expected in taught programmes. The list is not exhaustive, but covers types of assessment that are appropriate for evaluating students' performance across a range of intended learning outcomes. Most can be used for both formative and summative purposes, as appropriate. Where there is a strong predilection towards one purpose or the other, this is noted in the 'comments' column; otherwise there is no attempt to differentiate between suitability for formative or summative assessment.
- 3.2 A programme need not employ all of the forms of assessment listed in annex 2 but the range should be sufficient to enable the full spectrum of knowledge and skills (both subject specific and generic) embodied in the programme aims and objectives, and in unit or element intended learning outcomes, to be appropriately assessed individually or cumulatively.

The following principles should be applied wherever possible in assessing student work:

- (a) Different forms of assessment can (and where appropriate should) be used to test different types of skills.
- (b) It is regarded as good practice to utilise a variety of forms of summative assessment within a programme and also to provide formative experience of the summative assessment.
- (c) The volume of summative assessment in any programme must be the least necessary to measure the extent to which students have achieved the intended learning outcomes.
- (d) The overall assessment load associated with any unit must be appropriate to the level

of study, the credit point weighting, and the need for formative feedback. This must be evaluated when the unit is first approved and reviewed as part of annual programme review.

(e) Schools and Programme Directors should agree appropriate assessment methods to assist unit directors in choosing a set of formative and summative assessment tasks which are proportionate and consistent within the subject.

(f) In assessing a unit composed of more than one element, it is the unit as a whole, rather than the individual elements that needs to be satisfactorily completed. Elements need not be capable of being separately assessed although schools may require an element to be satisfactorily completed in order to pass the unit / enable the credit points to be awarded. Alternatively, if it is considered to be academically essential for a student to complete successfully one or more parts of a programme, those parts may be classified as units and assessed accordingly.

(g) Students should be given broad information about the assessment tasks they will encounter at the outset of the programme and the implications of any failure. Detailed information should be given at the beginning of each subsequent academic year on the timing and weighting of each assessment. Such information should be made available in school/programme and unit handbooks, on Blackboard and/or via email, and should be reinforced, both at the beginning of a unit and before each assessment.

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

- 3.3 Faculties have responsibility for setting assessment criteria based on the academic needs of their programmes and students, ensuring that students receive equitable treatment University-wide and clear guidance on the assessment requirements of their programmes and units.
- 3.4 Unit forms / specifications must ensure that sufficient information is provided about grade descriptors, marking criteria, etc. in aligning assessments, objectives and intended learning outcomes. This may be accomplished by reference to a generic document on grade descriptors and marking criteria.
- 3.5 Any significant changes to a unit, at whatever level it is approved, must automatically trigger a review of whether the assessment methods and criteria remain congruent with the unit's intended learning outcomes.
- 3.6 Existing annual review mechanisms for units (annual unit or programme reviews) must provide appropriate opportunities for regularly checking that the assessments used tests the stated unit objectives/learning outcomes. This should be a formal agenda item at annual reviews.

### ***Setting assessment tasks***

- 3.7 It is the responsibility of the head of school and the relevant programme director to ensure that processes are in place for conducting assessment (see *Guidelines for Programme Directors* at annex 3). Schools should appoint a school examinations officer(s) to be generally responsible for the conduct of assessment in the school (see also section 17).
- 3.8 To help ensure a common understanding of what is being asked of the student, as well as encouraging a consistent approach to marking, more than one person must be involved in the setting of assessment. It is essential that any assessment task is appropriately moderated.
- 3.9 Faculties and/or schools should have established mechanisms (such as a board of examiners' meeting), to scrutinise the assessment tasks set, to ensure they are of an appropriate standard and are consistent with the programme aims and objectives, content, intended learning outcomes and assessment methods. The timing of these mechanisms needs to take account of any assessment tasks students may be required to undertake at the end of, or during, teaching block 1.
- 3.10 External examiners should be sufficiently involved in the scrutiny of assessment tasks to enable them to fulfil their primary role in assuring the academic standards of programmes

of study. To facilitate this, they should have access to the relevant information relating to aims and objectives, contents, intended learning outcomes, assessment methods, marking criteria and any model answers.

#### **4 Conduct of formal unseen written examinations**

- 4.1 The procedures under which the University requires unseen written examinations to be conducted are set out in the University Examination Regulations (annex 4). Should any divergence from these procedures be requested, the chair of the relevant board of examiners must be consulted. S/he may act on behalf of the board, but may also wish to consult the undergraduate or graduate Education Director
- 4.2 The University's Examination Regulations contain detailed provisions concerning the handling of allegations of plagiarism, cheating and other examinations offences (sections 2.9 -11.10). Anyone with responsibility for handling such allegations must ensure that they are familiar with these regulations.

#### **5 Conduct of coursework and similar forms of written summative assessment**

**Coursework** is defined as any assessment based on essays, assignments, creative writing or other tasks that is completed in the students' own time. This section gives guidance on procedures concerning the conduct of this type of assessment. Summative assignments should be set, marked and moderated in the manner described in the Code.

Annex 2 (section c) summarises the broad purposes for which a formal assessment outside of unseen examinations can be used.

- 5.1 Students should be provided with timetables at the start of each unit indicating when coursework is to be set, submitted and returned. Deadlines for coursework should be provided in sufficient time for completion. Clear statements about how the student should apply for an extension to the original deadline and the penalties for late submission should also be provided.
- 5.2 Guidance on the penalties for the late submission of coursework is provided in section 15. Academic misconduct associated with continuously assessed assignments is dealt with as a disciplinary offence.
- 5.3 Formative feedback on coursework should be provided by staff, including on summative assignments. It should be returned promptly and in time to inform the work on subsequent assignments. Student-led forms of feedback should also be undertaken prior to any subsequent assignments (see section 13).
- 5.4 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) should be able to scrutinise examination papers and examples of work from units where assessment is entirely through coursework.
- 5.5 The academic member of staff responsible for a unit which utilises coursework as an assessment method should ensure that all those involved in the assessment process are aware of the guidelines for the assessment of the unit. Where marking of coursework is undertaken by more than one person procedures must be in place to ensure the uniformity of marking.

#### **6 E-assessment**

This Code also applies to summative forms of e-assessment. Schools may also wish to consider the principles and guidance below as advisable for formative forms of e-assessment.

- 6.1 Students should have had access to/experience of the exam format and the technology prior to the summative exam. Good practice would be to give students prior exposure to a formative examination with feedback.

- 6.2 Arrangements should be made for responding to unexpected technical failure in a way that is fair and efficient and within a reasonable timeframe. This includes technical support in case of server failure (see 6.4). In severe cases of technical failure, students should be offered an alternative paper format for the assessment.
- 6.3 The examination should be rehearsed in the same technological environment (although not necessarily with the same group of students) as the actual examination, to ensure that it is robust.
- 6.4 Invigilation should be appropriate to the type of e-assessment being used and will require technical invigilation where the server which delivers the assessment is located. This may require prior liaison and agreement with Information Services staff. Invigilators should be fully briefed prior to the assessment.
- 6.5 The summative examination should only be accessible by secure password and the performance recorded by university-approved secure management tools suited for the purpose.
- 6.6 Computers used for summative examinations should wherever possible have both internet and communication tools disabled, except as needed for the purpose of the assessment.
- 6.7 Reasonable and appropriate adjustments must be made for students whose disability would put them at a disadvantage due to the format of the examination. Students who have made a case for special arrangements must be offered an alternative to the computer based examination e.g. a paper based assessment (see section 9 for further information on assessment and disability).
- 6.8 The use of a large pool of examination questions from which a randomised sub-set of questions is generated to produce individualised student exams is acceptable as long as the pool covers all aspects of the examinable material and the sub-sample is representative. The appropriateness of utilising a pool of questions depends on the subject-specific content of the questions and how they were designed.
- 6.9 As is the norm with archiving summative assessment, the outcomes of the examination must be electronically recorded for quality assurance purposes. This is the responsibility of the relevant school.
- 6.10 Normally the School is responsible for the academic aspect of the e-assessment, whilst Information Services should be responsible for the technical infrastructure which enables the assessment to occur. Effective communication between schools and Information Services is crucial to ensure this.
- 6.11 Schools should ensure that the scheduling of e-assessments does not conflict with any central examinations timetable.

### ***Academic guidance***

The processes around setting e-assessment should be similar to those for other forms of assessment; in particular:

- 6.12 External examiners should have access to the questions and approve the assessment design.
- 6.13 All questions should be peer reviewed and staff offered support, perhaps in the form of training, in their design.
- 6.14 Negative marking should be allowed only if consistent with the purposes of the assessment (see 12.9).
- 6.15 Marks for questions may be based upon the level of difficulty of the questions. It is good practice to use a balance of question types of varying difficulty.
- 6.16 Examination performance using a computer based format must not be norm referenced; the contribution to the overall assessment should reflect the learning outcomes of the unit being assessed.

## 7 Oral examinations of individual students

These principles relate directly to **summative** oral examinations, though most of the principles are also applicable to **formatively** assessed examinations (e.g. class presentation).

- 7.1 Two examiners must normally be present during all oral examinations. *If* this is not possible then a procedure for recording the intended learning outcomes must be in place e.g. video, Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).
- 7.2 Oral examination 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 recall.
- 7.3 It is the responsibility of the school/examination board to demonstrate that the oral examination is reliable, fair and appropriate and adds value to the assessment portfolio.
- 7.4 The external examiner must have adequate access to all intended student learning outcomes, including those attached to the oral examination, to be able to form a judgement as to the fairness and appropriateness of the assessment and student performance.
- 7.5 In all cases where oral examinations contribute to the summative assessment of taught programmes, students and examiners should always be aware of the purposes of the assessment and all the possible implications of the outcome.
- 7.6 If an oral examination is part of the assessment for a unit, they must apply to every student taking that unit.
- 7.7 An oral examination is not permitted as a means of moderating a student's examination result or degree classification.

## 8 Anonymity

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>8.1 Anonymity must be preserved when marks are considered at examination boards.</li><li>8.2 Anonymity must also be preserved wherever practicable during the marking process though it is acknowledged that anonymity is difficult to achieve at certain points in the process for some types of assessment (e.g. fieldwork) and where cohort sizes are small (e.g. in some taught postgraduate programmes).</li><li>8.3 If, because of the nature of the assessment process, anonymity is difficult to achieve during the marking process, schools must assure themselves they have in place a fair and robust method of awarding marks. If this difficulty is due to the cohort size where only partial anonymity is possible, then a system of marking for all candidates must be adopted so to assure consistency of treatment for candidates.</li></ol> |
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- 8.4 To assure a sufficient level of anonymity students will be given a candidate number for retention until they have completed the programme.
  - 8.5 The principle of anonymous marking must also apply, as far as possible, to the assessment of postgraduate taught programmes. However, given the specialised nature of dissertations at any level, it may be impossible to achieve anonymity in assessing taught postgraduates.

## 9 Assessment and disability

- 9.1 Within reason schools should have procedures and mechanisms in place that anticipate the support needs of students with a disability (e.g. a School Disability adviser who liaises as required when a disability is disclosed). However, it is recognised that in some programmes (e.g. professional) some assessments cannot be adjusted as they test mandatory learning outcomes and/or a competence standard.
- 9.2 Schools should ensure that students are given the opportunity to disclose a disability throughout their programme of study and are made aware that failure to do so may have an impact on the ability to make any necessary reasonable adjustments.

- 9.3 Any student who discloses a disability such that additional support may be required should be referred to the *Access Unit for Deaf and Disabled Students*. In most cases the 'Access Unit' will develop a personalised support plan for the student, in collaboration with staff in the school/faculty and the student concerned. The plan should set out what reasonable adjustments should be made to support the student (including adjustments to assessment practice where required).
- 9.4 When faced with determining what is a reasonable adjustment to an assessment event, staff are advised to contact the *Organisational Development Manager (Diversity)* in *Personnel Services and Staff Development* in the first instance and at the earliest opportunity to obtain expert advice and assistance (contact details are provided in annex 5).
- 9.5 Where a student requires adjustments to assessment, they should complete and submit an alternative examination arrangements form at the earliest opportunity by the stipulated deadline. Students should be made aware that if the evidence is not made available by the deadline specified, the school may adopt a default position on what it considers reasonable and practicable to arrange within the time available.
- 9.6 Examiners are not obliged retrospectively to consider the effect of a disability, not declared and evaluated prior to the assessment, on a student's performance. The school may permit such students an opportunity to undergo a re-assessment, with appropriate reasonable adjustments, should this be deemed appropriate following a subsequent professional evaluation of the disability.
- 9.7 Programme and Unit Directors are encouraged to consider the accessibility of assessments and during annual programme review to consider whether assessment of the same learning outcomes could be undertaken in different ways without compromising any competence standards. In addition, it is also advisable to establish which learning outcomes justifiably constitute competence standards, in which case the duty to make reasonable adjustments may not apply.
- 9.8 Faculties should keep records of alternative assessment arrangements made by schools. Such arrangements are approved by the undergraduate or graduate Education Director or their nominee.

Further information and guidance on competence standards and the practical aspect of making reasonable adjustments to assessment because of disability is in annex 5.

The University's policy on Student Mental Health is available at:

[www.bristol.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/mhealth/studentmhealth/smh-policy.pdf](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/equalityanddiversity/mhealth/studentmhealth/smh-policy.pdf)

## **10 Religious observances and the timetabling of assessment**

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 Schools should make clear to prospective applicants and current students at the outset of their studies that it is the responsibility of the student to inform their *Faculty Office* about their religious beliefs, because of the potential for conflict with the setting of assessment. Students should also be reminded of this obligation through an appropriate entry in school or programme handbooks.
- 10.3 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.

## The Marking Process

### 11 Marking criteria for all assessment tasks (*under review during 2010-2011*)

- 11.1 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 (Glossary of terms) provides definitions of: *marking criteria, marking scheme and model answer*.
- 11.2 Explicit marking criteria (i.e. the broad learning outcome, knowledge and skills requirements which are taken into account in awarding marks) are necessary to enable consistent standards of marking and judgement to be maintained. They also help provide students with a clear statement of what is expected of them and provide guidance on how their performance may be improved.
- 11.3 Each Faculty should establish generic marking criteria. Faculty marking criteria may be supplemented at the level of individual programmes and/or units, to reflect discipline specific learning outcomes. Marking criteria should take into account the relevant nationally set subject benchmarks. See annex 6 for examples of marking criteria.
- 11.4 Marking criteria should be available to students for each assessment event. These criteria may range from general (faculty-level), for an entire discipline or subject-area, to highly specific (unit-level) for one assessment event. Programme documentation should contain the relevant general marking criteria. Where appropriate, unit documentation should include more specific criteria.
- 11.5 Marking criteria should be made available to students as well as staff, and specified in school and/or unit handbooks. Marking criteria should always be made available to staff and students before the assessment.
- 11.6 Where there is more than one marker for a particular assessment task, schools should take steps to ensure consistency by providing guidance (i.e. model answer or sets of marking criteria) for use by all markers and encouraging teaching teams to meet to agree their expectations of student achievement. The level of detail in the criteria may vary from subject to subject. Assessment criteria should 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. Markers are encouraged to use marking pro forma in order to show how they have arrived at the mark given. Comments provided on pro forma and mark sheets should help candidates, internal markers and moderators and external examiners to understand why a particular mark has been awarded.
- 11.7 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.
- 11.8 Where the subject in question does not lend itself to model answers, it should be possible for a marker(s) to articulate and justify an awarded mark, on the basis of the marking criteria or marking scheme. Faculties, whose marking process does not lend itself to precise numerical marking, may wish to consider using bands of marks.

### 12 Marking processes and internal verification (i.e. moderation)

- 12.1 The University assures the quality of its marking through moderation; exceptionally it uses double-marking in situations as described below. Definitions of the terms used in this section can either be found in this section or in the Glossary of Terms at annex 1.
- 12.2 All work assessed for summative purposes should normally be capable of being independently moderated and made available in case it needs to be moderated by the external examiner(s).
- 12.3 Where coursework is assessed summatively, schools should have in place a system to

ensure students' work is available for moderation at a later date, by a means that ensures the marked work is identical to that originally submitted.

- 12.4 Students should be informed at the outset of their programme of studies and at the beginning of each academic year of any obligation to make available assessed work which might be required for the purpose of moderation.
- 12.5 To assure consistency and fairness, each Faculty, through its Faculty Quality Assurance Team, should ensure that its schools have clear marking and verification procedures, as well as information on the operation of moderation, so that students are treated fairly. Such information, along with details on the University's procedure for handling the final programme mark within the borderline of classifications (see section 25), should be available to students (e.g. in the student handbook).
- 12.6 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.

12.7 There are two circumstances where **scaling** is permissible:

- i. 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.
- ii. 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.

12.7.1 Before scaling is used, the intention must first be discussed with the relevant Faculty Education Director, prior to application, and then approved by the relevant external examiners and the examination board.

12.7.2 The rationale for scaling should be recorded in the programme specification and/or in the minutes of the examination board in the case of (i) above, and in the minutes of the relevant examination board in the case of (ii).

12.7.3 The use of scaling must also be made transparent to students: in the case of (i), 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 (ii) students should be informed of the process, where it makes a significant impact, after the assessment. Schools are responsible for making the method and rationale available to students.

12.8 **Norm-Referencing** 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.

12.9 **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.

12.10 Some 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*).

12.11 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. 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 made clear to the students.

- 12.12 It is recognised that there are particular difficulties in providing for the second marking/moderation of class presentations which contribute to the overall unit mark. As long as the class presentation remains a small component of the overall mark, it is accepted that the benefits that stem from this form of assessment more than compensate for any limitations in the moderation procedure, particularly where oral skills form one of the learning outcomes. A formal record of how the assessment mark was arrived at will form the main source of evidence upon which moderation can rest, though alternative sources such as the audio and/or visual recording of the presentation may be used. All such evidence should be made available for moderation.
- 12.13 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 4, the following procedure must be followed.
- 12.14 If an examiner is unable to read a script, he/she should ascertain whether any colleague who is similarly qualified to act as an examiner for that examination is able to read and mark it. If no suitable examiner can be found, the chair of the board of examiners must be notified. The chair should write to the candidate asking them to attend for the purpose of transcribing their illegible script. The candidate must be advised in writing that the object of attendance is only to transcribe the existing script and that the addition or omission of any material will constitute an examinations offence. The candidate must be asked to sign their transcript confirming that it is a true copy of the original. Alternatively, a candidate may be invited to dictate the script for transcription, by another person, in which case the candidate should be asked to read and sign the resulting transcript. A photocopy of the original script must be taken before it is given to the candidate and it should subsequently be compared with the transcription to ensure accuracy. The transcript along with the script should then be returned to the original examiner for marking.

### 13 Formative feedback

*This section includes some statements in bold type to highlight the statements which are considered to be particularly significant, in view of the importance of formative feedback in the learning process.*

- 13.1 Formative feedback is an integral part of the learning process, helping students to evaluate their current level of performance and help them learn to improve it. The precise forms in which feedback is delivered will vary from unit to unit.

- 13.2 Each school must develop and publicise to its students a clear policy on the delivery of feedback, covering the following points:
- the different ways in which students will receive guidance on their work;
  - which assessment tasks students will receive feedback on, and in what form;
  - the schedule for the delivery of feedback on different forms of assessment and how students will be informed if it proves impossible to meet the agreed deadline;
  - what opportunities students will have to discuss their work and their progress with staff, along with guidance on how they should make use of feedback.

The policy on feedback must be in accordance with the following principles:

- 13.3 **Feedback should always be focused on helping students to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, both subject-specific and transferable, and to identify areas for improvement.** Explaining why a particular assessment mark was awarded may be part of this process as it helps students to understand what constitutes a good piece of work and evaluate their own performance according to those criteria, but it is not the primary purpose of feedback. This has implications for deciding which assessment tasks will involve feedback, and in what form it will be delivered. Assessment for formative purposes usually involves individual feedback to help the students improve their

performance in the unit overall. Whether it is appropriate to give detailed individual feedback on summative assessment tasks (rather than generic feedback given to all students on the unit) will depend on the relation of that unit to the students' work over the rest of the programme.

- 13.4 **Students should receive feedback that is appropriate to different activities and assessment tasks while also recognising the effective use of staff time.** Students should receive feedback on their knowledge and understanding of different subjects covered in the programme; so clearly there must be some form of feedback given in every unit. They should also receive feedback on the different subject-specific and transferable skills involved in their programme; this need not be delivered separately in every unit. Students may be resistant to less standard forms of feedback (e.g. peer assessment), and may not recognise as 'feedback' comments made, for example, during a practical class. This highlights the importance of communicating the school's policy on feedback clearly to all students (and see 13.8 below); it is also advisable to introduce students to as many different forms of assessment and feedback as possible at the outset of their programme of study.
- 13.5 **Feedback must be received in good time to influence the next activity or assessment task.** The amount of time required to give feedback on a piece of formative assessment will depend on the nature of the assessment task and other programme-specific factors, but feedback must normally be delivered within **three** working weeks of the deadline for submission, unless there is a special reason why this deadline cannot be met, e.g. if the type of assessment means it is logistically difficult to meet this timeframe. What is essential is that feedback must be received by the student in good time to influence the next relevant activity or assessment task — which may be part of a different unit — and that students must be given a clear statement of when they can expect feedback, so as to help them plan their work. Schools should take an overview of the range of assessment tasks students are required to complete, in different units on the programme, and review the relationship between the various deadlines, to ensure that students are afforded a reasonable opportunity to make best use of feedback.
- 13.6 **Where feedback is directly related to the student's level of performance, and especially where a piece of work is both contributing to the unit mark and serving formative purposes, it is important that it is closely related to the relevant marking criteria;** the use of pro forma feedback sheets can be an effective means of ensuring this (see example). It can also be useful to provide students with examples of work that exhibits the desired attributes, for example through an 'essay bank' or worked examples.
- 13.7 **Students must be given the opportunity to seek clarification and further advice.** Feedback on purely formative assessments is not a one-way process in which the marker simply communicates a judgement to the student; it is an integral part of the process of learning through reflection. Students should always be given the opportunity to seek clarification of the meaning or implications of comments made by the marker of the assessment; this may be provided through individual or group tutorials, or by ensuring that students are able, if they wish, to contact the member of staff during tutorial hours. It may be appropriate to consider how some students (e.g. those who are significantly under-performing) can be actively encouraged to take advantage of the guidance on offer.
- 13.8 **Students should be encouraged to reflect on the feedback they have received, not only in relation to the specific unit but in the context of their programme as a whole.** It may be effective to build such reflection into the programme of regular meetings with the personal or academic tutor, for example by making use of a 'Progress Review Form' (delivered through a web-based PDP system or given to students in hard copy) which expressly asks them to consider what lessons they have learned from the feedback they have received. They should also be directed towards appropriate training opportunities.
- 13.9 **Students should be supported in making best use of feedback.** The ability to respond appropriately and effectively to constructive criticism and advice is a skill relevant to any academic discipline and future career. However, students often do not see feedback as a way of improving their future performance, as opposed to explaining why they received a

particular mark, and do not always recognise as 'feedback' all the different ways in which they are given comments on their performance. Students have to be helped and trained to respond appropriately to feedback; through guidance in student handbooks, introductory sessions at the beginning of their university careers, and through the tutorial system.

- 13.10 It may be appropriate to withhold feedback as a penalty for the failure by the student to meet the deadline for submission of coursework, as long as there are no extenuating circumstances.
- 13.11 Further information on approaches to providing formative feedback for a number of different assessment practices is available at annex 7.

#### **14 Medical and other extenuating circumstances**

- 14.1 Information must be provided to students on the procedure for the treatment of medical and other extenuating circumstances. As a minimum, schools should include information in school student handbooks on the importance of informing the school about medical or other extenuating circumstances prior to the meeting of the relevant special circumstances committee and provide the date of the committee meeting. Staff and students in the school should be made aware of the correct person in the school to be provided with documentation of evidence.
- 14.2 The following extracts from the *University's Examination Regulations* (10.1-2) are relevant to this section:

##### 10.1 Information before Board of Examiners meets

Boards of examiners shall establish a committee to consider any relevant matters, for example personal matters such as illness or bereavement, that may have affected a student's performance in assessment. If a student wishes a board of examiners to take any such matters into account, he or she must complete and submit the relevant form before the meeting of the board at which the student's examination performance is to be considered. A written record must be kept of such matters. Any such matters which could have been raised before the meeting of the board, but without good reason were not raised, will not be considered in the event of an appeal.

##### 10.2 Evidence

The committee may require a student to submit such other evidence as it deems necessary to substantiate any matter raised by the student.

- 14.3 Students must complete the University's form for extenuating circumstances (available at: [www.bris.ac.uk/academicregistry/office/policies/](http://www.bris.ac.uk/academicregistry/office/policies/)) so as to inform the Board of Examiners for his/her programme of any extenuating circumstances that may have affected his/her ability to fulfil the criteria for the award of credit points or to perform to the best of his/her ability in assessment events. Relevant evidence must be provided.
- 14.4 Students should be informed about the procedure that should be followed in assessing their case, as set out in the University extenuating circumstances form and evidence that they will need to provide. This includes who the information will be disclosed to and how it will be stored. Schools should ensure that their procedures are arranged so the number of copies of the information is kept to a minimum.
- 14.5 A small 'special circumstances committee(s)' must be established, at either the Faculty or School level (to be determined by the Faculty), to consider the cases of candidates whose performance in any summative assessment may have been affected by illness or other extenuating circumstances.

- 14.6 Such a committee should be set up and run in accordance with the following principles:

- 14.6.1 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, e.g. a case-book recording past decisions may be kept so to enable comparison and promote consistency, although

the record should not set a binding precedent. The special circumstances committee should use its discretion in deciding on the severity and impact in any particular case. Judgements should be guided by University advice (see annex 8) as to what is considered *acute or chronic and mild, moderate or severe*.

- 14.6.2 The special circumstances committee should consider cases where students have brought evidence or made a claim that they may have been disadvantaged on the grounds of medical or extenuating circumstances.
- 14.6.3 The special circumstances committee may be chaired by the Chair of the Board of Examiners to which it reports. For Faculty of School Examination Boards where the Chair would also be involved in any appeal process, an alternative Chair for the special circumstances committee must be appointed.
- 14.6.4 The special circumstances committee should meet as soon as is convenient before the Board of Examiners.
- 14.6.5 The date of the meeting of the special circumstances committee is the last date on which a candidate can expect to have extenuating circumstances considered and taken into account by a board of examiners. Where a board of examiners has considered extenuating circumstances and made a discretionary decision (including not to take any action as outlined in 14.6.11) the candidate should, on request, be provided with written reasons for the decision.
- 14.6.6 The special circumstances committee should determine:
  - 14.6.6.1 which (if any) assessments may have been affected by the circumstances drawn to its attention;
  - 14.6.6.2 whether the impact on the student's capacity to perform is likely to have been mild, moderate or severe, and whether the extenuating circumstance was acute (of short duration and only likely to have negatively impacted upon the students performance in the assessment) or chronic (over a significant period of time and therefore likely to have impacted upon their learning as well as their performance in the assessment);
  - 14.6.6.3 whether sufficient allowance for the circumstances has already been made, for example, by making special arrangements for examinations or by granting extensions to deadlines.
- 14.6.7 The committee should note the reasons underlying its decisions and these notes should form part of the board of examiners' record of the decision.
- 14.6.8 The role of the special circumstances committee is to evaluate whether or not extenuating circumstances may have affected the candidate's capacity to perform. **It is not their role to determine the effect, if any, on the candidate's results.**
- 14.6.9 The Board of Examiners are required to note the advice given by the special circumstances committee on whether the circumstances are likely to have had a mild, moderate, or severe effect on the candidate's capacity to perform either during the assessment (following acute circumstances) or whether their learning may also have been affected (following chronic circumstances). The Board should then determine the effect, if any, on the candidate's results.
- 14.6.10 Information about the precise medical or other extenuating circumstances of the candidate must remain confidential to the special circumstances committee.
- 14.6.11 If there is evidence that a mark which is likely to have been affected by extenuating circumstances would have been better in the absence of those circumstances, the Board of Examiners shall take such decision, in respect of the student, as is fair and reasonable in the circumstances. The Board of Examiners shall take into account whether the students performance during the assessment was not a fair reflection of their level of attainment due primarily to acute circumstances or whether the students learning has been negatively affected due to chronic circumstances. Such decisions may include:

- awarding credit notwithstanding a failure;
- allowing the student to re-attempt the assessment without penalty;
- disregarding the affected mark for degree classification purposes;

The manipulation of the mark itself should be considered only as a last resort and applied in exceptional acute circumstances by:

- a higher mark being awarded on the basis of performance in other contexts.

- 14.6.12 Boards of Examiners may wish to seek professional advice e.g. medical opinion prior to making a decision, particularly if chronic circumstances are involved.
- 14.6.13 Boards of Examiners should ensure that their decisions in respect of students whose performance is impaired by extenuating circumstances are consistent over time.
- 14.6.14 Faculties or schools are encouraged to ensure that Boards of Examiners record their decision-making in ways that facilitate consistent decision making year on year.
- 14.7 A record of the consideration of medical or other evidence at any stage of the student's progress, reasoning for any decisions made and the outcomes agreed must be kept.
- 14.8 Guidance on student absence from assessment due to illness is provided at annex 9.

## **15 Penalties for cheating, plagiarism, other academic misconduct and the late submission of coursework** (See also sections 4 and 5)

- 15.1 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 presented, or referenced by a web link, in school handbooks together with specific information on 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.
- 15.2 In recommending a penalty to a board of examiners, an appropriately constituted committee or panel will consider the offence and penalty independently of the potential impact on degree classification. Whether the offence in question should be reflected in the degree class to be awarded is the judgement of the board. In such cases, the board should take into account any effect on the degree classification that the penalty already has had.
- The *University's Examination Regulations* (annex 4) contain full details of the procedures to be followed in respect of academic misconduct, including plagiarism.
- 15.3 Students should be made aware of the existence of penalties for not meeting deadlines. These should be clearly specified in writing to students and staff at the beginning of the programme and unit, preferably in the programme and / or unit handbook.
- 15.4 Faculties should ensure that their policies on the penalties for the late submission of undergraduate summative coursework, are in accordance with the following:
- 15.4.1 Coursework that is submitted after a deadline should be subject to some penalty, unless an extension has been agreed by the school prior to the deadline, or late submission is warranted by reason of illness or other extenuating circumstance (see the *University guidance on student absence due to illness* at annex 9).
- 15.4.2 Faculties should adopt an approach to the late submission of coursework within the framework provided and their schools should ensure that the policy is communicated to students at the outset of their studies, stated in student handbooks and re-iterated at the start of teaching of each unit.
- 15.4.3 Schools should ensure that students from other schools or faculties who register for their units are made explicitly aware of the faculty policy on the late submission of coursework.
- 15.4.4 For work submitted up to 24 hours after the agreed submission deadline, a penalty of ten marks out of 100 from the mark the student would have received applies (e.g. coursework that is marked at 60% would then become 50% once the penalty is applied).

- 15.4.5 Once seven days have elapsed after the submission deadline the student will receive a mark of zero, although schools may still require work of a satisfactory standard to be submitted in order for credit to be awarded.
- 15.4.6 Faculties should decide on the rate of reduction by day or at specific thresholds following the 24 hour period. When setting the rate by which the mark would be reduced the weighting of the assessment may be taken into account.
- 15.4.7 Any penalty applied should be in the form of a mark reduction from the mark the student would have achieved.

## **Roles and Responsibilities in Assessment**

The roles of the internal examiner and school examinations officer(s) have been split for the purpose of the Code but it is recognised that in some schools these roles may be held by the same person. The principal internal examiner and/or the examinations officer should be nominated by the head of school to take responsibility for liaising with the external examiner. It must be clear to all concerned who will undertake this contact role.

### **16 Internal examiners**

- 16.1 Internal examiners are normally the individuals responsible for assessment in the relevant unit. The curriculum vitae of all internal examiners who are not on academic pathways one and three, including anyone not holding academic status at the University, should be submitted annually for approval by the school, to the relevant faculty board or boards. Internal examiners are expected to attend the meeting(s) of the relevant board of examiners. Each faculty board should have a policy on the quoracy of its boards of examiners.
- 16.2 One of the internal examiners (the 'principal' internal examiner) for each unit (who is likely to be the unit director/organiser) should take academic responsibility for the unit's summative assessment. This person should ensure that the following tasks are completed satisfactorily: the setting of papers, liaising with external examiners, 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 principal internal examiner is responsible to the school board of examiners.
- 16.3 The principal 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.
- 16.4 He/she is also responsible for ensuring back-up systems are in place when electronic storage and transmission systems are in operation.

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

- 17.1 School examinations officer(s) should be appointed by the Head of School. Their role is that of organiser and co-ordinator of 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 board of examiners.
- 17.2 School examinations officer(s) should be the principal line of communication with the Faculty and to the University Examinations Office (Academic Registry).

### **18 External examiners**

- 18.1 The purpose of the external examiner system is to help ensure that:
- the academic standards of University awards and their component parts are set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that the standards of student performance are properly judged against this;

- the assessment process measures student achievement against the intended learning outcomes, and is rigorous, fairly operated, and in line with University policies and regulations;
  - the assessment process is fair and is fairly operated in the marking, grading and classification of student performance, and that decisions are made in accordance with University regulations.
  - the University is able to compare the standard of awards with those in other higher education institutions.
- 18.2 The duties and responsibilities of individual external examiners will be based on their role to act as independent and impartial advisors providing informed comment on academic standards set (including those associated with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) where appropriate) and student achievement in relation to those standards.
- 18.3 The University has its own internal quality assurance procedures for the processing and consideration of assessment marks, and attaches great importance to peer review from colleagues in other academic institutions, professional bodies, industry and commerce. When arriving at the degree classifications given to final year undergraduates and the final award for taught postgraduates, appropriate weight should be given to the view of the external examiner(s) as full and equal members of the Examination Board.
- 18.4 In addition to attendance at examination boards, external examiners also have the right to attend any other examiners' meetings relating to the programme with which they are concerned and at which decisions on individual students are to be taken. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to consult other external examiners of units taken by students in subjects outside their programme subject area.
- 18.5 The role of the external examiner is not confined to consideration of examination results and attendance at examination boards. External examiners may and are encouraged, to comment and advise on the content, balance and structure of programmes and units, the development and review of programmes and/or units, and on assessment processes.
- 18.6 External examiners have the right to see all examination scripts and any other work that contributes to the award result, though normally the external examiner would only receive a selection of scripts, as agreed in advance with the relevant school(s). The selection should normally include all examination scripts and other assessed work that contributes to the award results of candidates assessed internally as borderline, first class, third class, or failures. Where internal double marking takes place a third internal marker might be asked to adjudicate in circumstances where the first two internal examiners are unable to agree a mark. If this does not resolve the disagreement, the external examiner may be invited to provide a view.
- 18.7 Chairs of boards of examiners are responsible for conveying the contents of external examiners' reports to their schools as part of an on-going process of assessment review. The matter should appear as an item on the agenda for a subsequent school or examiners meeting and a record of any agreed alterations in assessment practices must be kept. External examiners should be given formal written feedback on the discussion of their reports and consequent changes in assessment practices. The school responses should also be forwarded to the Education Support Unit.
- 18.8 Annex 10 - *The Guidelines for External Examining of Taught Programmes* provides full details about the University's external examining processes.

## **19 Composition and role of programme ('school') examination boards**

- 19.1 This section should be viewed alongside ***Ordinance 17, Assessment for Academic Awards***, which includes details of the constitution and requirements for Boards of Examiners.
- 19.2 An 'initial' examination board is one which is convened at the programme or school level. Such examination boards must consist of at least three people and are convened to

approve each undergraduate and taught postgraduate academic award of the University. Membership of initial examination boards normally includes the internal and external examiners for each subject or group of subjects in the programme of study for the award. Such boards make recommendations to the faculty examination board of the faculty in which the degree is awarded. External examiners are normally required to be present at the meetings of the board of examiners for all programmes which lead to a University award, and to which they have been appointed as external examiner.

- 19.3 The Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry and Medical and Veterinary Sciences may choose to convene separate 'unit' examination boards as well as programme boards to reflect the nature of their professional programmes. A unit examination board must also consist of at least three people.
- 19.4 Discussions held at the programme or school examination board are confidential. The procedure for disclosing marks and results to students is outlined in section 27.
- 19.5 A designated member of the board of examiners must take responsibility for overseeing the processing of marks at all stages of the assessment procedure.
- 19.6 The written records of all meetings of boards of examiners should be kept and communicated to the faculty examination board. This should contain adequate details of the discussion of borderline cases and where individual medical or other extenuating circumstances are presented. A record should be kept of how and why decisions were taken (i.e. the reasons for each decision).
- 19.7 Schools should ensure they give as much notice as possible to all board members of the dates of examination board meetings and other occasions on which they may be required to be present so that the quorum of the board of examiners is met.
- 19.8 Boards of examiners should determine the range of assessed material and, where appropriate, the evidence relating to the award of marks for that assessed work that will be subject to moderation.
- 19.9 In some circumstances, in addition to marks, student work may be made available at the meeting of boards of examiners (for example where low marks on one part of a programme are being supplemented by and reviewed against additional work done by the student).
- 19.10 Boards of examiners should assure themselves that elements of formative work that is also used for summative purposes should be subject to moderation and should establish a mechanism to verify the authenticity of that work (i.e. that it is the student's own work and it is as it was originally submitted). See section 12 for details on internal verification / moderation.
- 19.11 Boards of examiners should assure themselves that the guidelines which determine the selection of scripts that the external examiner receives, as outlined in 19.6, are adhered to.
- 19.12 It is the responsibility of the board of examiners to draw the faculty board's attention to issues it wishes to raise. It should also refer complex cases, including those of unusual profile students (e.g. where students are awarded a zero mark as a result of plagiarism) to the faculty examination board.
- 19.13 During the period in which the new degree classification policy is being implemented, a Faculty Education Director, or nominee, will attend School Examination Boards in order to aid interpretation of the new policy for classification and provide insight on particularly complex cases.

## **20 Faculty examination boards**

- 20.1 The role of the faculty examination board includes: assuring fair and consistent treatment of candidates and their results across all schools in a faculty; monitoring assessment trends and any major deviations from norms faculty-wide; and receiving and assuring the broad appropriateness of generic school marking criteria.

20.2 The decision to approve the award result and confer a student is only final when approved by the faculty examination board. Until this occurs students' results are deemed to be provisional and subject to confirmation.

20.3 The remit of the faculty examination board is outlined in *Ordinance 17*:

3 (b) ...The faculty examination board shall be chaired by the dean or his or her nominee and its composition shall be determined by the faculty board. The faculty examination board shall not question the academic judgement of the initial examination board, but shall ensure that proper procedures have been carried out, and that the treatment of special cases is fair across the faculty, including consideration given for illness and personal problems affecting a student's performance, the award of aegrotat degrees and penalties imposed for plagiarism. Within this remit, the faculty examination board shall have the power to accept or amend recommendations made by the initial examination board.

20.4 The responsibility of the faculty examination board in alleged cases of cheating or plagiarism is outlined in the *Examination Regulations* (4.4):

If the alleged offence of cheating or plagiarism is considered by the chair of the school board of examiners, in consultation with the undergraduate or graduate dean of the faculty, to be more serious than should be handled at school level, taking into account the criteria listed [in section 8], the chair of the school board of examiners will notify the student in writing that the case will be referred to the chair of the faculty board of examiners. The student will also be informed, at this stage, whether any other examination scripts or pieces of work are under consideration.

20.5 Discussions held at the faculty examination board are confidential. The procedure for disclosing marks and results to students is outlined in section 27.

20.6 A record of each meeting of the faculty examination board should be kept, particularly of the reasons for decisions and how they are taken. This should contain adequate details of the discussion of borderline cases and where individual medical or other extenuating circumstances are taken into account.

Information on the roles and responsibility of the Academic Registry in the examinations process is available at annex 11.

## **Assessment Outcomes**

### **21 Pass marks**

#### ***Undergraduate level***

21.1 Within modular honours programmes, students must achieve at least 40 out of 100 to pass undergraduate units.

21.2 Within the professional programmes of the faculties of Medicine and Dentistry and Medical and Veterinary Sciences, students must achieve at least 50 out of 100 to pass at the unit/element level.

#### ***Taught Postgraduate level***

21.3 The pass mark set by the University for any level 7 (M) unit is 50 out of 100.

21.4 For a Masters award, candidates must achieve as a minimum, the average of the programme pass mark in the taught component. Faculties retain the discretion in respect of any programme within their faculty to require that a candidate for a Masters award also achieves a pass mark in all (or a specified proportion of all) units taken within that taught component.

21.5 Where taught postgraduate programmes include undergraduate level units the pass mark for the undergraduate unit remains 40 out of 100. Marks for these units must be taken into account in the calculation of the programme mark and cannot be adjusted.

21.6 Faculties and Boards of Examiners may exercise their discretion in exceptional cases to enable excellent marks in one or more units to compensate for lower marks in another. There should be no compensation between the taught component and the dissertation. Each Faculty has the authority not to use this discretionary compensation, especially when there are professional requirements for each unit to be passed at a particular level. The maximum number of credit points in which compensation is permitted is 30, whether as a single unit or multiple units.

21.7 Preparation for the dissertation, including experimental work, may begin before the examinations (or other assessments) have been completed. The dissertation may be suspended at the discretion of the Examination Board if the results from the taught component are unsatisfactory.

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

21.8 Undergraduate students and postgraduate students may be taught together. If undergraduate and 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 undergraduate and postgraduate students then they are deemed to be undertaking different units. Such units must have been previously approved at the different levels.

21.9 The levels of study and relevant qualification descriptors laid down by the QAA can be found in their national qualifications framework document.

## **22 Credit**

22.1 The University has a credit framework, reproduced on the following pages, these summarise the amount and level of credit required to receive a University award. The credit requirements for students first registered on programmes in, and after, 2010-11 is set out in the first table (22.2). The credit requirements for students who first registered on their current programme of study prior to 2010-11 is provided in the second table (22.3); which will apply until the time when students who first registered before 2010-11 are deemed to have completed their studies.

22.2 Credit requirements for students first registered on programmes of study in and after 2010-11:

Qualification	FHEQ Level	Previous UOB Level	Total credits required	Minimum credits required at the highest level*	Equivalent ECTS credits	Additional credit requirements
Taught Master's degree (including the four-year Integrated Master's degree)*	7	M	At least 180	150	The minimum requirement is 60. However, a range of 90-120 is more typical.	* The total credit requirement for the Integrated Master's programme is 480 credits, with at least 120 at the level of the qualification (7/M).
Postgraduate Diplomas	7	M	At least 120	90		Remaining credits to be at level C/4 or higher
Postgraduate Certificates (including the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE))	7	M	At least 60	40		
Bachelor's degrees with honours	6	H	At least 360	90	180 - 240	Remaining credits to include at least 100 at level I/5 or above
Bachelor's Degrees (Ordinary degrees)	6	H	At least 300	60		
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)	6	H	At least 60	40		
Graduate Diplomas	6	H	At least 80	80		
Graduate Certificates	6	H	At least 40	40		
Foundation Degrees	5	I	At least 240	90		
Diplomas of Higher Education	5	I	At least 240	90	Approx. 120	Remaining credits at level C/4 or above
Certificates of Higher Education	4	C	At least 120	90		
Pathway Certificate (single subject)	3	QCA level 3	At least 120	120		
Preliminary Certificate (Combined studies)	3	QCA level 3	At least 120	120		Normally 80 credit points to be gained in awarding faculty.

\* The highest level is the level of the qualification

**Notes:**

- 1) This table should be read in conjunction with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications ([www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI08/default.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI08/default.asp)) and the Higher Education Credit Framework for England (August 2008) ([www.qaa.ac.uk/england/credit/creditframework.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/england/credit/creditframework.asp)). 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) and BVSc (Veterinary Science) undergraduate programmes are not included in the University's modular structure and therefore do not have credit points attached to them.
- 3) At the discretion of the Faculty joint honours degrees may vary from the minimum of 100 credits at level 6 because of the need for more flexible structures in joint programmes.
- 4) Individual students can choose to 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.
- 5) The purpose of combining the stand-alone and integrated Masters qualifications is to emphasise equivalence of achievement.
- 6) The Quality Assurance Agency has published a statement on the PGCE qualification title which can be found at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/PGCEstatement.asp>
- 7) 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)
Master's degrees	Second Cycle Qualifications (Min. 60 ECTS credits, however a range of 90-120 ECTS credits is typical)
Integrated Master's 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

22.3 Credit requirements for students first registered on their current programmes of study before 2010/11:

Qualification	FHEQ Level	Previous UoB Level	Total credits required	Minimum number of credits required at the highest level*	Additional credit requirements
<b>Postgraduate level awards</b>					
EdD, DDS, DSocSci, EngD, DEdPsy	8	D	at least 540	360	Remaining credits to be at level M
Master's degree	7	M	at least 180	130	Remaining credits to be at level C or higher
Postgraduate Diploma	7	M	at least 120	90	Remaining credits to be at level C or higher
Postgraduate Certificate	7	M	at least 60	60	n/a
<b>Undergraduate level awards</b>					
MSci, MEng (Integrated (4-year) Master's degree)	7	M	at least 480	80	Remaining credits to include at least 240 at levels H and I (no less than 120 at level H)
Graduate Diploma	6	H	at least 120	80	n/a
Graduate Certificate	6	H	at least 60	60	n/a
Honours degree	6	H	at least 360	100	Remaining credits to include at least 100 at level I or above
Ordinary degree	5	I	at least 300	120	Remaining credits may include some at level H
Foundation Degree	5	I	at least 240	120	n/a
Undergraduate Diploma	5	I	at least 240	80	Remaining credits at level C or above
Undergraduate Certificate	4	C	at least 120	120	Students who registered directly onto a Certificate before August 2001 may supplement a minimum of 90 credits at level C with a maximum of 30 credits at QCA level 3.
Pathway Certificate (single subject)	-	QCA level 3	at least 120	120	
Preliminary Certificate (Combined studies)	-	QCA level 3	at least 120	120	Normally 80 credit points to be gained in awarding faculty.

\* The highest level is the level of the qualification

**Notes:**

- 1) This table should be read in conjunction with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications ([www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI08/default.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI08/default.asp)) and the Higher Education Credit Framework for England (August 2008) ([www.qaa.ac.uk/england/credit/creditframework.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/england/credit/creditframework.asp)). 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) and BVSc (Veterinary Science) undergraduate programmes are not included in the University's modular structure and therefore do not have credit points attached to them.
- 3) At the discretion of the Faculty joint honours degrees may vary from the minimum of 100 credits at level 6 because of the need for more flexible structures in joint programmes.
- 4) In the MSci and MEng, the University minimum of 80 credits at level 7 does not prevent schools and faculties from fulfilling requirements of professional bodies for a higher proportion of level 7 credits.
- 5) Individual students can choose to 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.

- 22.4 An important principle in the framework is the recognition that qualifications are based on cumulative learning. There is an acceptance of the concept of building upon postgraduate qualifications to lead to advanced awards.
- 22.5 The amount and level of credit specified in the above tables should be regarded as the University minimum. Where a school wishes to diverge from these amounts, the Faculty must seek University level approval, through Education Committee.
- 22.6 Some faculties and schools have guidelines at a more detailed level to determine, for example, the mark required at postgraduate diploma level to permit a student to proceed to the dissertation and the prospect of the award of a Master's degree. Such detailed arrangements are also matters to be decided and approved at faculty level.
- 22.7 The University's procedures for progression and the award of credit can be found in section 23 and in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes*.

### **Credit points**

- 22.8 In assigning credit points to units, faculties and schools are required to use as a measure total student input per normal full-time year of study. An average of 40 hours per week of total student input in term time is suggested as an appropriate measure of the time an average student will need to spend to be able satisfactorily to complete the assessment for a programme. Contact hours will vary between academic disciplines.
- 22.9 In taking a single honours degree programme a student will not normally be required to obtain more than 120 credit points in any full-time year of study.

If the units comprising a degree programme are taught in more than one faculty or school, for example in joint honours schools, the total number of credit points required in any curriculum year should not exceed 130.

Exceptionally Senate may, on the recommendation of a faculty board, allow schools to require students to obtain in excess of 120/130 credit points in a full-time year of study, as may arise for example in the cases where requirements of professional bodies have to be taken into account.

Where optional units are available in any programme, students may choose a combination of units whose credit points total in excess of 120.

The attainment of additional credit points in any curriculum year 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.

- 22.10 A unit shared by students from more than one programme or school must always be allocated the same credit points.
- 22.11 Except as specified below, credit points may be used once only and may not be used towards two or more awards of the University or of another institution and the University. The exceptions are:
- i. with the consent of Senate, where an award at one level may be subsumed into an award at a higher level;
  - ii. with the consent of Senate, where a University award or award of another institution has independent standing as a professional qualification and is accredited by a professional body;
  - iii. where a student in the Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry and Medical and Veterinary Sciences intercalates a year of study for the degree of B.Sc. in the same or another faculty.

No student who is registered for a programme of full-time study leading to a qualification of the University of Bristol may concurrently be registered on a programme of full-time study leading to the award of a qualification of another institution.

22.12 It is the responsibility of the school and board of examiners to determine whether or not a student has satisfied the criteria for the award of credit points.

### **23 Progression, the award of credit and re-assessment for undergraduate programmes** *(under review during 2010-2011)*

#### ***Student progress***

23.1 Each faculty will be responsible for developing clear conditions for the progress of students registered on programmes within the faculty. In the case of students following the same programme of study but registered in different faculties, the Boards of those faculties will jointly be responsible for determining conditions for progress, which will be set out in faculty and school guidelines relating to the treatment of examination marks. It is not necessarily the case that 120 credit points must have been obtained in a curriculum year in every case, in advance of progression. Likewise, the achievement of 120 credit points in a curriculum year does not, of itself, ensure progression to a subsequent unit.

23.2 Decisions on progress need to take account of the possibility of credit accumulation and transfer. Credit points may be awarded even if the conditions for progress within the faculty have not been fulfilled, enabling the student to use the credit in some other way, for instance in transferring to another programme either in the University or elsewhere.

23.3 Arrangements must be made to ensure that students are fully aware, at the time of registration, of the assessment requirements of their programmes and the criteria for progress relating to the units on which they are registered. Suitable documents for transmitting such information include faculty and school handbooks and it is the responsibility of programme directors and unit organisers to ensure delivery of guidance to students in this area.

#### ***Criteria for the award of credit points***

23.4 The following criteria are recommended for use in awarding credit points. The list is not comprehensive and is intended as a guide:

- Reaching a satisfactory standard (normally a mark of 40 out of 100 for units at level 4/C, 5/I and 6/H) in one or more of the following:
- a formal examination, project report, extended essay or other form of written work;
- 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.

23.5 The criteria for the award of credit points must be made explicit by the school(s) concerned and specified in advance of the student commencing study in a unit. A faculty may choose to award credit points in individual cases in circumstances where students have obtained marks in an examination or other work in a range of 30-39 and have satisfied additional criteria, clearly specified in advance.

23.6 Any additional criteria which affect the award of credit points (e.g. attendance at lectures, tutorials, laboratory or fieldwork sessions) should be specified explicitly in unit assessment criteria made available to students prior to commencement of their study of the unit.

23.7 The school offering a unit will have responsibility for setting the procedure for assessment, and for awarding an overall assessment mark and credit points upon successful completion of the unit. It will be for the faculty in which the student is based to determine and apply the rules for progress in the programme, as stated in section 23.1.

23.8 If failure to obtain credit points for any unit occurs in any assessment other than those relating to the final year of study, the relevant faculty committee will recommend one of the following, as appropriate:

- that the student subsequently re-take and pass the unit or the assessment of the unit, obtaining the necessary credit points;
- that the student subsequently achieve a satisfactory standard in an additional approved unit of at least equivalent value;
- that the student be required to repeat the year of the course as a whole;
- that the student withdraw from the programme, with an award, if appropriate.

### **Opportunities for re-assessment**

23.9 Guidance on the opportunities for re-assessment that ought to be offered to undergraduate students is as follows:

- 23.9.1 Subject to the approval of the Board of the Faculty, re-assessment of any unit for the award of credit points should be offered to any student who has failed to obtain the credit points at the first attempt.
- 23.9.2 Any re-assessment of a unit should normally be completed prior to the commencement of the final year examination.
- 23.9.3 An appropriate method of re-assessment for all units should be devised, with the approval of the relevant faculty(ies), not necessarily in the same form as the original assessment.
- 23.9.4 Opportunities for re-assessment of units should be made clear to students at the start of their programme/unit.

23.10 The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes* outlines the procedure for re-assessment at the taught postgraduate level.

### **Assessment for the final programme mark / degree classification**

23.11 If a student fails an examination and the subsequent re-sit, or, as a result of recognised extenuating circumstances, has not achieved the pass mark in the appropriate examinations to allow him / her to progress, the student: can be withdrawn from the programme, with an exit award as appropriate; can repeat the whole year; or, can be placed on a supplementary year. Students who are placed on a supplementary year are expected to be registered on the units they have failed and any additional study skills units, as determined by the faculty. Guidance for faculties on implementing the supplementary year is at annex 12.

23.12 In any reassessment of a unit which contributes to the final programme mark and/or degree classification, and which is passed, the minimum pass mark (normally 40 out of 100 for units at levels 4, 5 and 6) will be formally awarded even though a student may achieve a higher mark in the re-assessment, save where there was good cause for the initial failed assessment.

23.13 If a student does not satisfactorily complete a unit in assessments contributing to the final programme mark and/or degree classification, and if this results in failure to obtain the credit points needed for the award of a degree, the degree may not be awarded unless the failure is due to certified illness or other sufficient cause. However, having received the prior approval of the Faculty Board and Senate, a Board of Examiners or a Faculty may choose to award 120 credit points for the final year of study on the basis of a pass overall in the final year's examinations. Such approval may only be sought in respect of a particular programme or group of programmes, and not in respect of individual students after the event.

- 23.14 A Board of Examiners or a Faculty may also choose to 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.
- 23.15 In order to acknowledge the work carried out by a student during his/her period at the University which is curtailed by reasons of a personal, medical or academic nature, the following award structure is referenced in the table showing minimum and maximum periods of study for full time undergraduate awards within the General Regulations for First Degree Programmes in Modular Form:
- i. After a minimum of 4 years' study - MEng, MSci or Honours degree - Not less than 480 credit points
  - ii. After a minimum of 3 years' study - Honours degree - Not less than 360 credit points
  - iii. After a minimum of 2.5 years' study - Ordinary degree - Not less than 300 credit points
  - iv. After a minimum of 2 years' study - Diploma in Higher Education - Not less than 240 credit points
  - v. After a minimum of 1 year's study - Certificate in Higher Education - Not less than 120 credit points
- 23.16 It should be noted that the University does not award special undergraduate diploma or certificate courses.
- 23.17 The attainment of additional credit points in any curriculum year cannot be carried forward in such a way as to reduce the number to be taken in any succeeding year, or to accelerate a student's progress towards any award.

## 24 Suspension of studies

- 24.1 The *Guidance on Establishing the Grounds for Granting a Suspension of Studies and Subsequent Return to Study for Undergraduate Students* is available at annex 13.
- 24.2 Guidance on granting a suspension of studies for taught postgraduate students is available in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes*.
- 24.3 The undergraduate or graduate Faculty Education Director is authorised to approve a suspension of studies on behalf of the Faculty. All approved suspensions should be reported to the Faculty Board.

## 25 Degree classification

- 25.1 Bands of marks for use in final undergraduate degree classification:

### **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 (H).

\* The pass mark for the professional programmes in Veterinary Science, Medicine and Dentistry is 50 out of 100. The bands above do not apply to the professional programmes in Veterinary Science, Medicine or Dentistry.

## 25.2 Bands of marks for use in taught postgraduate awards:

Award with Distinction	not less than 65 out of 100 for the taught component overall and not less than 70 out of 100 for the dissertation though faculties retain discretion to increase this threshold; or, for existing Masters programmes that do not have a separate dissertation: not less than 65 out of 100 overall with a mark of not less than 70 in two thirds of the total credit points for the award, though faculties retain discretion to increase this threshold.
Award with Merit	not less than 60 out of 100 for the taught component overall and not less than 60 out of 100 for the dissertation though faculties retain discretion to increase this threshold; or, for existing Masters programmes that do not have a separate dissertation: not less than 60 out of 100 overall with a mark of not less than 60 out of 100 in two thirds of the total credit points for the award, though faculties retain discretion to increase this threshold.
Pass	50 and over out of 100
Fail	49 and below out of 100

### ***Common rules to calculate the final programme mark and degree classification for undergraduate programmes***

- 25.3 Common algorithmic rules will apply to all **new** registrations from the 2010-11 academic year on an undergraduate programme (and therefore first applying to intercalating students in the 2012-13 academic year) so to calculate the final programme mark and/or degree classification. Students registering before 2010-2011 will continue to be governed by the *regulations* for degree classification that were in place at the time of their initial registration, for the duration of their programme of study.
- 25.4 This policy applies to all undergraduate students, including those who study on a part time basis. For this purpose, where reference is made to 'years of study' the rules in this 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.
- 25.5 The various options for faculties and departments to offer students who do not complete all the required assessment for honours classification in relation to Ordinance 18 is provided at Annex 14.

#### Primary Rule

- 25.6 First year marks will not contribute to the calculation of the final programme mark and/or degree classification.
- 25.7 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 accredited prior learning, please see section 26.
- 25.8 The weightings apply to years of study, *not* to the level of the units taken by a student within the year.

25.9 The default position is that within each faculty a single weighting rule will apply, unless a faculty is able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of 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.

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Foundation degree	0:100
Aegrotat degree (unclassified)	N/A
Ordinary degree (unclassified)	N/A
Bachelor's honours degree by intercalation	0:0:100
<p>Bachelor's three year honours degree</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for subjects where there is an emphasis on the incremental skills, knowledge and understanding that will be accumulated during the programme, the weighting rule gives a significantly higher weighting to the final year.</li> <li>for subjects in which a more balanced weighting is deemed appropriate with some recognition of progression.</li> </ul>	<p>0:25:75</p> <p>or</p> <p>0:40:60</p>
<p>Bachelor's four year honours degree that includes and requires study abroad or in industry (i.e. away from the University) for one academic year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>for subjects where there is an emphasis on the incremental skills, knowledge and understanding that will be accumulated during the programme, the weighting rule gives a significantly higher weighting to the final year.</li> <li>for subjects in which a more balanced weighting is deemed appropriate with some recognition of progression.</li> </ul>	<p>0:15:10:75</p> <p>or</p> <p>0:30:10:60</p>
Integrated four year master's degree	0:10:40:50
Integrated four year master's degree that includes and requires study abroad or in industry (i.e. away from the University) for one academic year	0:15:10:75
Integrated five year master's degree that includes and requires study abroad or in industry (i.e. away from the University) for one academic year	0:10:10:30:50
Professional five year undergraduate programmes (unclassified)	N/A

25.10 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 a sixth of the whole year mark, if the student has to achieve 120 credit points during the year.

25.11 Individual unit marks will be recorded to one decimal place only and must not be rounded to the nearest integer. The overall final programme mark must be rounded to the nearest integer (up if 0.5 and above or down if 0.4 or below). This must be done PRIOR to determining whether the final programme mark is within the borderline range.

25.12 The honours programme classification boundary ranges are based on marks out of 100 and are:

2.1/1 equal to or more than 68 but less than 70

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

3/2.2 equal to or more than 48 but less than 50

Fail/3 equal to or more than 38 but less than 40

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

Note: the professional programme classification boundary ranges (pass/fail, merit and distinction) will be determined and incorporated into the Code in due course.

### Secondary Rule

25.13 If the final summative programme mark falls within the range of one of the classification boundaries, as set out in 25.12, the higher degree classification will only be awarded if 50% or more of the individual unit marks, weighted by credit point value and year of study, which contribute to the degree classification are achieved at the higher class, otherwise the lower class will be awarded.

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

25.15 No further rules will apply for the calculation of the degree classification **following** application of the single algorithm.

25.16 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 by the University's Programme Approval Group and be described in the relevant programme specification, and be implemented **before** the algorithm is applied.

## **26 Applying Accredited Prior Learning to the Calculation of the Final Programme Mark and/or the Degree Classification**

### *Accredited Prior (Certified) Learning – AP(C) L*

26.1 With regard to applications for AP(C)L, Schools should consider the learning which has been accredited at the other institution and decide, in the best interests of the student, how this may be taken into account. The School has discretion 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) whether marks may be transferred. (*Ref: 2.4 the University's Guidelines on the Accreditation of Prior Learning for all taught programmes*).

26.2 Where a student is exempted from units due to recognition of prior credit from another institution, and these units contribute to the final programme mark and/or degree classification but the marks are not accepted, these unit(s) will not be considered in the algorithm for the purpose of calculating the final mark and the degree classification.

26.3 If a student is exempted from a **year of study** (due to accredited prior learning) that would otherwise contribute to the final programme mark and/or the degree classification, but **marks have not been transferred**, no weighting will be given to the "exempt" year when determining the final programme mark and/or the degree classification. The

relevant weighting must be applied, on a pro rata basis, to the remaining years of study. For example, if a student is exempt from the second year of study:

- Bachelor's three year honours degree: 0:25:75, will become 0:0:100;
- Integrated four year master's degree: 0:10:40:50, will become 0:0:45:55.

26.4 Where a student is exempted from units (due to accreditation of prior learning from another institution) that contribute to the final programme mark and/or degree classification and the **marks are accepted** by the University, the transferred marks will be 'converted' and incorporated into the algorithm for calculating the final programme mark and degree classification.

#### *Accredited Prior Experiential Learning - APEL*

26.5 Where a student is exempted from units due to the recognition of the non-certified acquisition of relevant skills and knowledge, gained through relevant experience, and where these units contribute to degree classification, then these unit(s) will not be given any weight in the algorithm when calculating the final mark and the degree classification.

See the *Guidelines on the Accreditation of Prior Learning for all taught programmes* for further information: [www.bris.ac.uk/esu/facultyadvice/policy/aplguidelines.html](http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/facultyadvice/policy/aplguidelines.html).

## **27 Disclosure of marks and results**

27.1 There is no general requirement to return examination scripts to candidates but schools are encouraged to share exam results with students wherever this can make a useful contribution to formative feedback. School boards of examiners should adopt a consistent policy on the matter. Staff should be aware that any comments made by examiners in relation to specific candidates, with respect to any assessment including coursework, must be disclosed if the candidate makes a formal request under the Data Protection Act 1998. However, this possibility should not inhibit markers from making comments as appropriate to indicate why, in their judgement, a script or piece of work merits any given mark.

27.2 No marks that contribute to examination results should be disclosed to students unless they have been agreed by the faculty board of examiners or are clearly identified as being provisional.

27.3 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.

27.4 Degree results may be published on school noticeboards or websites at the discretion of the relevant school(s). The anonymity of the student must be protected in publishing these results (e.g. using the University of Bristol student number not names).

27.5 Schools should arrange for designated staff to be available on the next working day/two days following the meeting of the faculty board of examiners to advise students of the results agreed by the board of examiners for individual papers or units and, where appropriate, whether the board of examiners took account of any 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. Designated staff should advise students of any recommendations already reported to or going forward to the Progress Committee or Faculty Board regarding any failure; investigate any extenuating circumstances raised by the student that could not reasonably have been made known at an earlier stage, and advise the student of his/her right to make representations. Faculty Offices should arrange, in appropriate cases, for this advice to be communicated in writing to the student, stating clearly the date by which they should make representations either in writing or in at a personal interview with designated staff, the undergraduate or graduate education director, or the dean.

27.6 Students making representations to designated staff, the undergraduate or graduate education director or the dean with regards to 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.

27.7 Faculties and schools should bear in mind the need to comply with the Data Protection Act when disclosing personal information. Guidance about compliance with the Data Protection Act should be obtained from the Secretary's Office.

## **28 Appeals against decisions of boards of examiners**

28.1 All information concerning the University's regulations for complaints and appeals is contained in annex 4, the *University's Examination Regulations*. An extract follows:

### *11.1 Right to appeal*

*Under these regulations a student may appeal against a decision of a Faculty Board (the 'Board') in respect of any appealable decision. A Faculty Board includes a Faculty Board of Examiners or Faculty Progress Committee. An appealable decision is a decision in respect of:*

- a) an examination or other form of assessment; or*
- b) a student's progress, including a decision in respect of a suspension or a requirement to withdraw from the University*

*Those hearing the appeal will not attempt to re-examine the student, nor to appraise professional academic judgements, but will consider whether the decision made was fair, and whether all relevant factors were taken into account.*

*No appeal will be considered unless it:*

- a) is made on permissible grounds; and*
- b) states the outcome sought by the student.*

*Permissible grounds are:*

*1) There has been a material irregularity in the decision making process sufficient to require that the decision can be re-examined. By way of illustration:*

*(i) the assessment and subsequent decision making process were not conducted in accordance with the relevant regulations;*

*(ii) an adverse decision has been taken because of an -administrative error;*

*(iii) the student has not been given the opportunity to draw relevant matters to the attention of the Board;*

*(iv) appropriate account was not taken of illness or other extenuating circumstances known to the Board.*

*2) A student's performance in assessment has been affected by illness or other factors which the student was unable for good reason to divulge before the meeting of the Board (see section 10 of the Regulations).*

*3) A penalty imposed under these Regulations is wrong or disproportionate.*

*No appeal will be considered if it raises for the first time issues concerning the supervision or teaching of a student. Such matters will only be considered if they have been raised by the student promptly, at the time they first arose and pursuant to the Student Complaints Procedure.*

*Disagreement with the academic judgement of the Board will not constitute a ground of appeal.*

28.2 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 in the *Examination Regulations* (annex 4) governing appeals, with particular attention drawn to the 21 day deadline from the date of notification of the decision for submitting a formal appeal. They should also be reminded that a degree cannot be conferred whilst an appeal is ongoing.

28.3 Eligibility for students to graduate at a degree congregation will depend on the degree being confirmed by a specific date, normally two weeks prior to the start of the degree congregation (the precise deadline date is set by the examinations and degree congregation offices annually). Appeals that have not been resolved by this date will result in the student being offered the opportunity to graduate at the next available ceremony.

## **29 Transcripts**

29.1 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.

29.2 The transcript in the approved format, as attached, will show a single assessment mark for each unit, which represents the mark agreed by the Board of Examiners. This might be a combined mark to take into account different elements of assessment such as written work, practicals, coursework etc.

29.3 The approved 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.

29.4 Transcripts in the approved format will be provided automatically for students on completion of their studies. Transcripts are also available upon request from the relevant Faculty Office. Students may be provided with up to three free transcripts within a year of their graduation. Subsequently, a charge will be levied for the provision of transcripts.

## **30 Retention of Student Work**

30.1 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.

30.2 When setting their policies, schools should take into account the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, where relevant.

Approved by Senate, 7 May 2008

Amendments for 2009/10: approved by Senate, 15 June 2009 and under vacation powers, August 2009.

Amendments for 2010/11: approved by Senate, May and June 2010