

Section C: Progression regulations

1 Principles of progression and key features

1.1 The following provide the key features of the progression regulations:

- i. to achieve an award a student is required to progress through a series of stages of study by achieving a specified number of credits;
- ii. the academic performance of students is considered at least once each academic year by a Course Examination Board, which will decide whether the student may:
 - o progress to the next stage of study (either unconditional or conditional);
 - o not progress i.e. either continue to study at the same stage/level or be excluded from the course due to academic failure;
- iii. **failed** modules may, at the discretion of the examination board, **be referred** up to 50% of the credit studied in a stage of study;
- iv. **failed** modules may, at the discretion of the examination board, be **repeated** either by:
 - o continuing to study at the same stage or;
 - o **trailing** up to 20 credits per 120 credits studied into the next stage of study (conditional progression).
- v. **failed** modules may, at the discretion of the examination board, be **compensated** up to a maximum of 20 credits per 120 credits studied in the stage of study;
- vi. progression may involve decisions about referral, repeat (including trailing) and compensation and such consideration should take place on completion of a stage of study⁴⁹.

1.2 Provided that the student meets the requirements as set down in the course regulations, including any attendance or other requirements, the student shall be allowed to continue their studies without interruption until the final assessment.

The authority of the Vice-Chancellor to suspend or exclude students for disciplinary reasons is not affected by this regulation.

1.3 Where course regulations allow a student to study for up to 20 credits at either a lower or a higher level than that normally required by the stage of study, this credit should be included when considering matters of progression or award.

Additional credit gained at a higher or lower level should be treated in the same way as all other credit achieved at that level, regardless of the student's stage of study, e.g. all level 4 credit should be treated as level 4 and not included within the determination of the Honours classification.

⁴⁹ Applies to both full-time and part-time programmes.

- 1.4 Where appropriate, the Course Leader or the Chair of the Examination Board acting on behalf of the examination board may counsel the student that in the student's own interests the student should: withdraw from the course, intermit (**refer Section A11**), or change to a different mode of study.

2 Stage of study

- 2.1 A stage of study is defined as any set of course components⁵⁰ assessed together at any one time, where the results of this assessment directly affect the way in which the student progresses through the course.

Stages of study are identified to allow a student's progress to be formally considered by an examination board.

- 2.2 For undergraduate courses, a stage of study will normally be equivalent to the number of credits studied in an academic year e.g. 120 credits for an Honours degree. For postgraduate awards such as the Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate, a stage of study will normally be the total number of credits comprising the award.

A Masters award may comprise two stages of study; the first being equivalent to the taught modules included in the award (i.e. 120 credits), followed by the final element taken in the second stage of study.

Stages of study will normally be designed during the course development process and confirmed at validation. Subsequent changes will be subject to the approval process for major/minor changes for courses.

- 2.3 Where assessment of modules takes place at different times in the academic year, for example in consecutive terms or semesters, the course regulations will define the way in which individual modules are grouped together to form a stage of study.

- 2.4 The course regulations should state for each stage of study:

- i. the conditions for entry to that stage;
- ii. any requirements, beyond the passing of individual modules and attainment of the associated credit, for an overall 'pass' to be awarded for the stage for example, any attendance requirement, or additional assessments or work-based experience which must be completed satisfactorily;
- iii. where a particular level of performance in a stage leads to the student proceeding on a particular route or pathway through the course e.g. Honours or Unclassified Degree routes, or different named awards within a programme, the minimum level of performance leading to each such route or award, and how decisions regarding the future route or pathway will be reached;
- iv. whether, in assessing the student, the Course Examination Board shall consider only the student's performance at the current stage or shall take into account the results of an earlier stage, if any. When the Course

⁵⁰ In this document, a course component (component) is a unit of assessed work which is ratified by an Examination Board, and will be either a module (in modular courses) or a unit or one of the individually credit rated parts into which a course has been divided (in unitised courses).

Examination Board determines the final award (with classification, if any), the course regulations shall state clearly the procedures to be used by the examination board in considering any mitigation or compensation at an earlier stage.

3 Referral

3.1 Where a student has not achieved a pass in a module, a student can be referred if, in the view of an examination board, the student can demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes for the module without having to repeat the module in full.

3.2 The following regulations apply to the referral of modules:

- i. a referral is permitted at the discretion of the examination board;
- ii. a referral may be permitted in modules at all levels;
- iii. there is no minimum mark below which a referral is not permitted. However, where the module is composed of one assessment task only, a referral should only be permitted where the student has attempted the assessment task. Where the module is composed of more than one assessment task, a referral should only be permitted where the student has attempted at least one of the assessment tasks;
- iv. the amount of credit that a student can normally be referred in is no more than a maximum of 50% of the total credit in the stage of study;
- v. a referred module is capped at 40% for undergraduate modules (levels 4-6) or the lowest pass grade and 50% for postgraduate modules (level 7);
- vi. a referral would not be permitted where:
 - o a student has failed to satisfy any learning contract associated with the module;
 - o the failure is in a task where supplementary assessment is not possible, such as a clinical placement or a fieldwork module.

3.3 Referral at the award stage

Regulations regarding referral at the award stage are made on a course by course basis, taking into account the overall aims and objectives of the course and the regulations of any associated PSRB.

Course-specific regulations will state whether or not referral is permitted at the award stage. It is possible that some courses may permit referrals at the award stage in general, but may proscribe referral in certain modules, for example a project or dissertation taken at the award stage.

3.4 Referral and Examination Boards

3.4.1 For modular courses, where a student has been permitted referrals in modules by Area Examination Board(s), the Course Examination Board will endorse these referrals provided that the student has accumulated no more than the maximum number of referrals permitted on the course at the current stage of study. Where the student has accumulated more than the maximum number of referrals permitted, the Course Examination Board will use its discretion to determine which, if any of

the referrals can be taken (up to the maximum). The remaining referrals which are not endorsed will be deemed fails.

For non-modular courses, the Course Examination Board will determine whether or not to permit referrals, up to the maximum number permitted on the course at the relevant stage of study.

3.4.2 For each referral the examination board⁵¹ should determine:

- i. the additional work to be undertaken by the student (**refer Section C3.4.3**);
- ii. the deadline for submission;
- iii. any conditions which pertain to the referral e.g. the minimum mark required for the referral to be passed.

3.4.3 The options available for the additional work are:

- i. reassess the student by providing supplementary assessment(s) (which may be a repeat of a previous element of assessment, or a new task designed to test the same learning outcomes) as a replacement for all or some of the original diet of assessments.

In this case the student's performance in the module after referral will be decided on the basis of the mark(s) or grades(s) in the supplementary assessment(s) substituting for the original mark(s) or grades(s), and using the original weighting of marks, where appropriate;

- ii. reassess the student by providing one new item of assessment, the performance in which will alone determine whether the student has satisfied the requirements of the module after referral.

3.4.4 Students should not be informed of any supplementary assessments, or undertake any additional work, until the result has been confirmed by the Course Examination Board, as the Examination Board may allow:

- i. a threshold failure to be compensated; or
- ii. in exceptional circumstances, moderate the marks on that module and hence change the initial decision of the marker.

In addition, students should not be informed of any supplementary assessments until the Course Examination Board has ratified the referral as the examination board may:

- i. award some credit by compensation; or
- ii. permit conditional progression; or
- iii. deem that, in light of the student's overall profile, the stage should be repeated or the student excluded from the course.

3.4.5 Exceptionally, where additional work has been undertaken before the referral has been ratified by the Course Examination Board, the Examination Board will:

⁵¹ Area Examination Board in a two-tier structure and Course Examination Board in a single tier scheme.

- i. consider first the original marks for the modules and decide whether or not to endorse any referrals;
- ii. only once this has been agreed will the outcome of any referrals already undertaken be considered.

3.4.6 The marks for any supplementary assessment(s) will be considered at a subsequent meeting of the relevant examination board. The examination board will determine overall performance in the module by considering the student's aggregated performance, including the results of any referred work, and the result will be either pass or fail.

If the examination board set an alternative assessment, or placed particular conditions on the referral, the examination board will agree a pass decision if these conditions have been met and a fail decision if they have not.

3.4.7 When a student fails to meet the learning objectives of the module after undertaking supplementary assessments then, if the supplementary assessment is a reassessment in some or all elements, where the marks or grades obtained can be aggregated with the marks for the other tasks taken at the first attempt, then whichever is the higher of the two aggregated marks or grades achieved should be recorded.

4 Level 4 module assessment - in-year module retrieval

4.1 In-year retrieval is part of the structured learning process for level 4 modules.

4.1.1 All level 4 modules which include an assessment up to and including week 17 of the University Teaching Calendar must offer an in-year module retrieval opportunity unless a specific exception to the scheme has been approved. Exceptions will normally be considered for pedagogical and practical (e.g. timetabling) reasons, and PSRB requirements. School Academic Scrutiny Committees will approve exceptions and report those exceptions to Academic Services for monitoring and reporting purposes.

4.1.2 Participating modules will indicate clearly which assessment(s) are subject to in-year retrieval. Participating modules must include delivery and assessment in Semester 1, and can include year-long modules which provide an interim assessment prior to the start of Semester 2.

4.1.3 Academic Services will publish annually the submission date by which all in-year module retrieval work must be submitted by students. Schools may opt to have a final submission date earlier than the University date where this is academically appropriate. Where for clear operational reasons schools wish to have a date later than the University date this must be agreed with the Quality and Standards Manager (Academic Standards and Assessment) and will normally be considered only for submissions relating to physical artefacts or in-person examinations.

4.1.4 The assessment mode must enable a retrieval by means of correcting the original submission. This is most likely to work effectively on modules with written assessments (e.g. essay) or some other form of structured written assessments (e.g. poster, portfolio), though individual schools may wish to consider other forms of assessment for this process if they are able to administer them effectively.

- 4.1.5 The assessment task will be structured in two parts as follows:
- Part 1(a) - primary assessment task (e.g. 2000 word essay);
 - Part 1(b) - re-working of original task following feedback to correct weaknesses.
- 4.1.6 All assessments will also have a referral task (e.g. full resubmission).
- 4.1.7 Students achieving a pass (40%) in Part 1(a) will not take part 1(b)
- 4.1.8 Students achieving a mark of less than 40% in Part 1(a) will be given the option of undertaking Part 1(b) during the first year assessment review period. The student will be provided with structured feedback identifying areas of the original submission to be improved. The mark for the retrieval work will be capped at 40% (i.e. it is the work that is capped, not the module).
- 4.1.9 The retrieval work will focus on the correction and revision of the original submission. It will not require a full resubmission of the work (or production of a new piece of work).
- 4.1.10 Failure of attempt Part 1(a) and Part 1(b) or Part 1(a) alone where Part 1(b) is not taken will lead to a standard referral or repeat (subject to Course Examination Board decisions) and a full reassessment (attempts 2 and 3).
- 4.1.11 Students achieving a mark of 40% or above at the initial submission of assessment are not eligible for the in-year module retrieval and are not allowed to submit further work to increase their original mark.
- 4.1.12 Students failing to make an initial submission of assessment will not be eligible for the in-year module retrieval process.
- 4.2 Operational requirements
- 4.2.1 Where a student fails a participating assessment, the student will be advised of the mark, provided structured feedback, and offered the opportunity to undertake the in-year retrieval work.
- 4.2.2 It is wholly the choice of the student to participate in the in-year retrieval. The decision should be based upon advice given by the module tutor who assessed the original piece of work via a one-to-one tutorial. Consideration should be given to the level of challenge associated with redeeming the failure on the single piece of work. Deliberation should also be given to the overall workload for a student if they have more than one failed piece of work.
- 4.2.3 Students do not need to pre-declare participation.
- 4.2.4 Schools will publish information concerning tutor access for in-year retrieval modules.
- 4.2.5 Modules participating in in-year module retrieval should not be considered by examination boards until the in-year retrieval process is complete. This normally precludes their inclusion in interim examination boards.

5 Repeat

5.1 Where a student has not achieved a pass in a module, and where an examination board does not consider that a student can demonstrate the learning outcomes for the module by undertaking supplementary assessment(s), the student is **failed**.

A Course Examination Board may permit the student to repeat the module in full (**refer Section C5.2**). This can either be by **trailing** the module i.e. the student is registered for the outstanding credit alongside their study in the next stage of study (**refer Conditional progression Section C6**) or by slowing progress to successfully complete the stage of study before becoming eligible to progress.

5.2 The following regulations apply to repeat of modules:

- i. a repeat is permitted at the discretion of the Course Examination Board;
- ii. students may be allowed to repeat modules, or study additional modules with the purpose of substituting these for previously failed modules, at any level. The Course Examination Board may either stipulate the additional module to be studied, or stipulate a range of modules from which a substitute must be chosen;
- iii. regulations regarding repeats are made on a course by course basis, taking into account the overall aims and objectives of the course and the regulations of any associated PSRB. It is possible that some courses may permit repeats for modules taken at the award stage in general, but may proscribe repeating of certain modules, for example the award stage project or postgraduate final element;
- iv. where a module is repeated, the examination board has the discretion to permit a student to carry forward any passed marks for assessment tasks within the module and where there is no change in the assessment method. An assessment task is defined as an element of summative assessment, the mark for which is submitted and ratified by an examination board.
- v. a repeat module is capped at 40% for undergraduate modules (levels 4-6) or lowest pass grade, and 50% for postgraduate modules (level 7);
- vi. one further referral may be permitted if a repeated module is failed (unless the student has reached the maximum number of assessment attempts permitted under the regulations).

5.3 Substitute modules

The following regulations apply to substitute modules:

- i. a student may be permitted to attempt a substitute module in place of the failed module, except where the failed module is mandatory or compulsory for the course;
- ii. any substitute module will be proposed by the Course Leader and must be approved by the Chair of the Course Examination Board. The substitute module will be marked as though it was being repeated i.e. capped at 40% for undergraduate modules (levels 4-6) or lowest pass grade, and 50% for postgraduate modules (level 7), and may not itself be repeated;

where a student has failed a module on their third assessment attempt, the student is not permitted to take a substitute module in order to allow them to continue on the course.

6 Conditional progression – repeat of failed module(s) by trailing

6.1 A Course Examination Board will determine whether or not a student is permitted to take repeat module(s) in addition to the standard diet for the next stage of study⁵² or whether the repeat module(s) should replace certain module(s) during the next stage of study (trailing).

If the course is insufficiently flexible to accommodate the trailing module(s), this will mean that the student's programme of study is extended beyond the normal length associated with the mode of study.

In making this decision, the Course Examination Board will be mindful of the student's overall profile and the requirement not to overburden students, while aiming to facilitate continued study where this is appropriate.

6.2 Conditional progression is permitted only at the discretion of the Course Examination Board, and is not a student's right.

6.3 No student is permitted to study for more than 140 credits during one academic year i.e. 20 trailed credits alongside the standard 120 credits for full-time students. For courses with stages of study containing different numbers of credits, the number of additional credits which may be taken varies *pro rata*.

Exceptions are permitted only where the PSRB associated with the award specifies otherwise, and must be agreed at the time of validation with the approval of the Chair of the Academic Board. Where conditional progression conflicts with the requirements of the PSRB this will be stated within the course regulations and the examination board will never permit conditional progression.

6.4 Where the Course Examination Board permits a student to progress conditionally, the conditions which apply must be made clear to the student; failure to fulfil the conditions will be considered by the next meeting of the Course Examination Board and may result in the student being required to change their mode of study, or be excluded from the course.

If the trailed module is failed and not compensated, the student may not proceed to the next stage of study, irrespective of their marks during the academic year, as the student would not have fulfilled the condition of the previous progression.

6.5 Conditional progression (progression trailing module(s)), cannot normally be used in addition to compensation, i.e. an examination board cannot normally compensate failure in 20 credits (for every 120 credits studied in a stage) and allow a student to trail additional failed module(s) into the next stage of study. Compensation should be considered before permitting a student to proceed conditionally (**refer Section C7**).

6.6 Where conditional progression is considered by the Course Examination Board, the academic rationale for the final decision should be stated explicitly within the minutes of the Examination Board.

⁵² Where this is possible given timetabling constraints.

6.7 As decisions regarding conditional progression are matters of academic judgement, a student may not appeal against the decision of the Course Examination Board not to permit conditional progression. This does not affect the student's right to appeal in accordance with the regulations (**refer Section H**).

6.8 Conditional progression and attendance

6.8.1 A Course Examination Board will determine whether the repeated module should be studied in full, or taken by assessment only.

There may be cases where it is reasonable for a student to take a repeated (trailed) module by assessment only during the next academic year, without attendance. This is at the discretion of the Course Examination Board and depends, in part, on the evidence that the student has made a serious attempt at the module and has performed to a level which indicates that the student has a good chance of passing if reassessed without further guidance and support.

6.8.2 For modular courses, because of the nature of a decision regarding assessment without attendance, and its dependence on the specific module requirements, an Area Examination Board has responsibility for determining whether or not a student should be permitted to take a module by assessment only. The Area Examination Board should determine this for each failed module for each student.

The Course Examination Board receives the recommendation of the Area Examination Board, and considers this in receiving the full profile of a student's marks. The Course Examination Board will normally confirm the decision of the Area Examination Board unless the student has not achieved sufficient credit to permit progression.

6.9 Conditional progression and mitigating circumstances

6.9.1 There may be cases where the student has submitted valid mitigating circumstances for a failed module(s) and where the decision might therefore be to defer the module. However, conditional progression may be more appropriate, and may also be more suitable than the award of compensation where it is reasonable to suppose that a student's mark would be substantially improved by taking the outstanding assessments. In such circumstances, the Course Examination Board may allow a student to trail a module in addition to the normal diet for the next stage. This decision is at the discretion of the Course Examination Board, which will take into account the overall burden of assessment to which the student will be subject. All categories of module may be trailed with the exception of those designated as 'mandatory for progression'.

7 Compensation

7.1 A Course Examination Board may at its discretion award credit by compensation at the end of a stage of study in a student's programme.

7.2 The following principles apply to the award of compensation:

- i. compensated credit is not graded and is not awarded against a specific module;
- ii. the award of compensation is a matter of academic judgement and not of arithmetic. The examination board will consider whether the student's overall profile merits the award of the full diet of credit available for the stage of study and the result of the award of compensation will be that the student has achieved the necessary credit to progress to the next stage of study or be eligible for an award;
- iii. the raw marks for the module(s) taken and failed remain on the student's record, and will be used in determining the final classification (where appropriate), although fails will not appear on any final transcript;
- iv. compensation should be applied to a student's profile at the end of a stage of study;
- v. the extent of compensation should be no more than 20 credits for every 120 credits studied in a stage of study⁵³.

In cases of courses with stages of study with fewer than 120 credits, compensation may be awarded *pro rata*. It may also be appropriate, in certain circumstances, for the examination board to consider the award of compensation once a student has completed a minimum of 60 credits⁵⁴;

- vi. a student may, at the discretion of the Course Examination Board and subject to overall limits on compensation, be compensated in a trailed module (a repeat of the module taken alongside modules in the next stage of study) which has been failed;
- vii. compensation may be awarded where a student has failed a module but has submitted mitigating circumstances which have been accepted, where there is evidence to suggest that the student would have passed the module, and where it would be in the student's interest to continue with their studies without being required to take the outstanding module(s).

In such cases a mark will not be awarded for the module and the algorithm to determine degree classification, where appropriate, may therefore be based on fewer credits than normal;

- viii. for students who are progressing from one stage of study on a programme to another, compensation may be awarded if the Course Examination Board considers:
 - o that the student's overall profile warrants the award of the full diet of credit available for the stage of study, and that they should be allowed to

⁵³ Exceptions to this are permitted only where the PSRB associated with the award specifies otherwise and must be agreed at the time of validation with the approval of the Chair of the Academic Board. Documentation provided for students should make clear the normal criteria for compensation, including the requirements of a PSRB on their programme of study.

⁵⁴ For part-time students it is usual for the full set of modules (120 credits) to be completed before compensation is considered.

continue with their studies without the need for reassessment (referral/repeat);

- it would be in the student's interest to continue on their studies. It may be more appropriate that students be compensated at the formative stage of study rather than at the contributory stage;

ix. in considering whether or not it is appropriate to award compensation at the final assessment stage of a programme, the Course Examination Board will normally consider whether or not the student has met the learning outcomes for the course;

x. compensation may not be awarded:

- if a mandatory module has been failed;
- where a student has not made a serious attempt at the failed module(s).

xi. compensation should not normally be awarded:

- when a student has failed to attempt the full diet of assessment in any failed module(s);
- where a student has failed modules in a specific area of the course for which compensation has previously been granted.

7.3 The reasons for the decision to award compensation should be recorded in the minutes of the Course Examination Board meeting.

7.4 As decisions regarding the award of compensation are matters of academic judgement, a student may not appeal against the decision of a Course Examination Board not to award compensation. This does not affect the student's right of appeal in accordance with the regulations (**refer Section H**).

8 Unavailability of elements on a course

A student may not demand to be reassessed in elements which are no longer current in the course. Where it is impracticable for students to be reassessed in the same elements and by the same methods as at the first attempt, the Course Examination Board may make such special arrangements as it deems appropriate to conduct the reassessment.