

# Undergraduate Degrees and Awards: Assessment Procedures

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[TQA Manual - Introduction and Contents](#)

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*[Implementation: for all undergraduate students with effect from October 2005 (unless otherwise exempted)]*

## 1 Introduction

1.1 This paper summarises the procedures now approved by Senate for use by Boards of Examiners for all undergraduate programmes as follows:

- Nomenclature
- Progression and summative assessment procedures
- Re-assessment procedures
- Consequences of failure in referred assessments
- Consequences of failure in deferred assessments
- Aegrotat passes and Aegrotat awards
- Classification of awards

1.2 These general University procedures will be supplemented by more detailed assessment conventions for each Board of Examiners submitted by Colleges and approved annually by the Board of the Faculty of Taught Programmes (the 'Faculty Board', or the Dean of Faculty acting on its behalf).

1.3 All assessment and classification conventions will be in the public domain.

1.4 Codes of practice regulating the procedures of Boards of Examiners and the work of external examiners are included in the TQA Manual.

1.5 The disclosure of marks to students is regulated by conventions included in the TQA Manual.

## 2 Nomenclature

The following definitions are adopted for the purposes of this document:

*Levels and Stages:* A level is an indicator of the relative demand, complexity and depth of learning associated with a module or stages of a programme. Each stage of a programme consists of 120 credits of modules at a level (or mix of levels) appropriate for that stage (as defined by the programme specification). Programmes of 360 credits therefore consist of three stages, and programmes of 480 credits of four stages. For full-time students, there will typically be a clear relation between years of study and stages. For part-time students, a stage may require two or more years of study of modules totalling 120 credits. For further reference, please see the Levels and Awards Framework in the [TQA Manual](#).

*Deferral:* A first attempt at a module assessment/examination permitted to a student prevented from previously completing it for good reason, normally medical. Deferrals shall normally take place within one calendar year of the initial assessment.

*Referral:* A further attempt, following initial failure, at a module assessment/examination without the requirement to repeat any attendance.

*Repeat Study:* A further attempt, following an initial or second failure, at a module assessment/examination with a requirement that it be taken only following the equivalent of the period necessary to repeat the associated module in its entirety. In some instances individual candidates will be permitted to repeat "with or without attendance"; in others "attendance" or "non-attendance" may be specified. Repeat study can be of individual modules or of an entire stage of study and is normally only available once throughout a student's period of study.

*Reassessment:* The process by which failure or non-completion of assessment is handled through deferral, referral or repeat study.

*Summative Assessment:* Final assessment point in a particular programme of study determining the award given and classification of that award where appropriate. For undergraduate Certificates, this will be at the end of Stage 1. For undergraduate Diplomas, this will be at the end of Stage 2. For Single Honours and Combined Honours programmes, this will be at the end of either Stage 3 or Stage 4, depending on whether the programme consists of 360 credits or 480 credits, respectively.

*Stage Average:* The average mark a student has achieved over all credits assessed in one stage (expressed as a percentage and combining individual module marks with weightings which reflect the credit attached to each).

*Final Weighted Mark:* The average mark a student has achieved over all credits assessed which count towards final classification, weighted by stage as per Section 8.

*Award of Credit:* The pass mark for individual modules and award of associated credits is 40%. Marks below 40% constitute failure. Failure of modules at any stage will normally be required to be condoned or reassessed.

*Condonement:* The process that allows a stage to be passed despite failure to achieve 120 credits in the stage, provided that a stage average of at least 40% has been achieved over the 120 credits of assessment including the marks for any failed and condoned modules. Normally, only up to 30 credits can be condoned per stage, and some programmes may exempt some or all modules from condonement, as specified in the relevant programme specification. On the student transcript no credit will be given for condoned marks, and such marks will be recorded on the student transcript in their original form. Students will not be given the opportunity of reassessment in the condoned credit.

### 3 Progression and Summative Assessment procedures

3.1 The procedures detailed below (including nomenclature) will be adopted by all Boards of Examiners. Where accrediting bodies require alternative nomenclature, application by the College concerned should be made to the Faculty Board for approval.

3.2 *Absence from Examinations:* The treatment of students failing to undertake examined assessments will be as follows:

(a) If a student is absent from examination(s) with properly documented medical, or other extreme personal circumstances known to the College before the relevant Board of Examiners, the examination(s) will normally be deferred.

(b) If a student provides a reasonable explanation of their absence before the relevant Board of Examiners which does not fall under (a) above, the Board of Examiners will regard the absence as a fail with a mark of 0 for the module(s) in question and subsequently treat the mark in the same way as any other failure.

(c) If no reasonable explanation for absence is produced by the student to the Board of Examiners, a recommendation will be made to the Faculty Board to deem the student to have withdrawn from the University.

3.3 *Progression:* At any stage, progression (including progression to award in the final stage) will operate as follows:

- Pass in accordance with Board of Examiners' conventions (section 1.2) required for progression to the next stage (or award in the final stage), which will require, as a minimum, assessment in at least 120 credits at the stage, a stage average of 40%, and normally the achievement of at least 90 credits at the stage.
- Normally, up to 30 credits of failure may be condoned at any stage; however, certain programmes may exempt some or all modules from condonement, as specified in the relevant programme specification.
- Where there is more than 30 credits of failure, the assessment procedures for individual programmes should specify a consistent strategy for identifying the modules to be condoned. (Examples of such strategies may include condonement of the highest or of the lowest module mark(s), or a preference

for condonement of options over condonable core modules). Note that no condonement is possible where the stage average is below 40%.

3.4 *Summative Assessment*. Progression to award at the final stage, and classification of that award will operate as follows:

- Subject to passing the final stage in accordance with 3.4, the Board of Examiners will recommend that Senate grant the award and classify that award in accordance with the guidelines set out in section 8.

#### 4 Re-Assessment Procedures

4.1 The following sets out the action available to Colleges when dealing with failure to progress at a Stage (including failure to progress to an award at the final Stage). Note that it is not the responsibility of a Board of Examiners to make recommendations about the consequences of failure for individual students (i.e. whether referral, deferral, repeat study or withdrawal should result). This is the responsibility of the relevant College Dean(s) involved who shall, after due consultation within the College(s), submit recommendations to the Dean of Faculty. (This formulation reflects a legal judgment which required that processes of academic assessment should be clearly separated from those concerning the consequences of failure.)

4.2 *Referral*:

(a) If students fail a module for the first time, and cannot be condoned in the failure then referral can be recommended. Referrals will usually be held in the August/September assessment period, or, otherwise, normally at the next assessment period. Students successful in any referred assessment will have recorded the mark of 40% only for the relevant module. Unsuccessful candidates will have the higher of the two fail marks recorded for progression and classification purposes (i.e. the higher of the mark in the original assessment or that in the referral). A referred candidate must be examined on the syllabus and in accordance with the assessment requirements in force at the time of the original assessment.

(b) Where a student fails part of an assessment, but passes the module as a whole, he or she will progress to the next stage (note that certain Boards of Examiners may require all elements of a module to be passed for professional accreditation purposes).

(c) Where a student fails part of an assessment, and fails the module overall for the first time without condonement, he or she will normally be referred in the failed element only, with the module mark capped at 40%.

4.3 *Repeat Study*: If a student fails a module (or modules) for the first time, cannot be condoned in the failure and either referral is not possible, or a decision is made in consultation with the student that repeat study is more appropriate than referral, then repeat study can be recommended. Students required to repeat a stage (120 credits) or individual modules will normally be expected to do so with

attendance. Such students will be treated as though they are new registrations and will have recorded the actual marks they achieve in all assessments in all repeat modules. Students repeating a stage will normally start at the beginning of the next academic year. The opportunity to repeat a stage will normally be only available once throughout a student's programme of study. Students repeating individual modules will normally start at the beginning of the next available delivery of the module(s). Students must make applications to the Faculty Board through their College if they wish to delay their repeat study.

- 4.4 *Deferral:* If a student is prevented from completing assessment requirements for a module (or modules) for valid and sufficient medical or personal reasons then deferral may be recommended. Deferrals will usually be held in the August/September assessment period, or, otherwise, normally within one calendar year of the initial assessment. Candidates will only be permitted to sit deferred assessments if the Board of Examiners has received appropriate written medical or other evidence. A deferred candidate must normally be examined on the syllabus and in accordance with the assessment requirements in force at the time of the original assessment. It will be for Colleges to recommend to the Dean of Faculty appropriate action where any exceptional circumstances relating to deferral are concerned.

## 5 Consequences of Failure in Referred Assessments

- 5.1 Absence from referred examination(s) will be treated as described in 3.2. Success or failure in a deferred referral will be treated as it would be for a referral.
- 5.2 Where, after referral a student still has failed marks beyond those which permit progression to the next stage or to classification of the award (according to 3.4 or 3.5) the College(s) involved can recommend to Faculty Board:
- (a) *An award commensurate with the results achieved.* In particular, at the summative assessment an unclassified Ordinary Degree can be awarded based on achievement of an overall average of 40% in the assessment of
- (i) Three year programmes: at least 300 credits including not more than 150 credits at level 1 and at least 60 credits at level 3
- (ii) Four year programmes with year abroad in stage 3; at least 420 credits, including not more than 150 credits at level 1 and at least 120 credits at level 3,
- (iii) Four year programmes with year abroad in stage 2; at least 420 credits including not more than 150 credits at level 1 and at least 60 credits at level 3

Standard rules for condonement in individual stages apply (see 3.3) and the overall average referred to combines individual module marks with weightings which reflect the credit attached to each.

(b) *Allowing the student to proceed to an alternative award commensurate with results that can still be achieved.* In particular, students must have successfully accumulated at least 180 credits (including no more than 150 at Level 1) for a recommendation to proceed to the Ordinary Degree for a three Stage programme, or 270 credits (including no more than 150 at Level 1) for a recommendation to proceed to the Ordinary Degree for a four Stage programme.

(c) *Allowing progression carrying the failure.* This may be recommended subject to a maximum of 30 credits and normally only in the following circumstances:

- Where, following referral, progression would normally be allowable under general requirements (40% Stage average and 90 credits achieved at the Stage), but some or all of the credits still failed are not condoneable under the relevant programme specification.
- Where, following referral, a student has achieved a Stage average of 40%, but has not achieved 90 credits at the stage.

In recommending a candidate to proceed to the next stage under these circumstances, Colleges must make recommendations to Faculty Board taking into account the academic requirements of the programme at future stages. Students must be carefully advised over any implications for module choice, prerequisites at the next stage, assessment requirements and financial support. In addition Colleges should be confident of the candidate's ability to pass the assessment(s) carried while also studying (if full-time) for the 120 credits of the next stage. Faculty Board will also consider recommendations from Colleges which involve taking a replacement module (or modules) (where permissible under the programme specifications and to a maximum 30 credits).

(d) *Allowing repeat study of part or all of the stage.* Colleges must make recommendations to Faculty Board if they consider that after referral the student could ultimately meet the requirements of the programme but needs repeat study to provide the necessary foundation. Note that repeat study is normally only available once throughout a student's period of study.

(e) *Withdrawal from the programme.*

## 6 Consequences of Failure in Deferred Assessments

6.1 Absence from deferred examination(s) will be treated as described in 3.2 except that an Aegrotat pass or award may also be considered in relation to missed deferral as described in 7.

6.2 Where, after deferral, a student still has failed marks beyond those which permit progression to the next stage or to classification of the award (according to 3.4 or 3.5) the College(s) involved can recommend to Faculty Board:

(a) *Progress and referral at the next assessment period:* This may be recommended where a student fails deferred assessment in August/September subject to a maximum of 30 credits and normally only in the following circumstances:

- Where, following deferral, progression would normally be allowable under general requirements (40% Stage average and 90 credits achieved at the Stage), but some or all of the credits still failed are not condoneable under the relevant programme specification.
- Where, following deferral, a student has achieved a Stage average of 40%, but has not achieved 90 credits at the stage.

In recommending a candidate to proceed to the next stage under these circumstances, Colleges must make recommendations to Faculty Board taking into account the academic requirements of the programme at future stages. Colleges must be carefully advised over any implications for module choice, prerequisites at the next stage, assessment requirements and financial support. In addition Colleges should be confident of the candidate's ability to pass the assessment(s) carried while also studying (if full-time) for the 120 credits of the next stage.

(b) *Non-Progression and referral at the next assessment period:* This may be recommended where the failure exceeds 30 credits, or where the failure totals 30 credits or below but the College is not satisfied that the student can progress to the next stage carrying a referral in the failed assessment(s). Such students must pass the referred assessment(s), normally at the next available assessment period, prior to progression.

(c) *Alternative recommendations:* Faculty Board may allow alternative recommendations which could include the setting of a referred examination in late September or the interruption of a student's studies until a referred assessment has been completed.

## 7 Aegrotat Pass and Aegrotat Awards

- 7.1 Where students are prevented by illness or exceptional personal circumstances from taking a deferred assessment at any stage they may request that an Aegrotat pass or, at the final stage, the award of an unclassified Aegrotat degree be considered under the terms of Ordinance 13.
- 7.2 Under the terms of Ordinance 13, an Aegrotat Pass or Award will be permitted on one occasion only during the course of a student's programme of study. Where an Aegrotat Pass has been granted in a student's stage 2 (or in stage 2 or stage 3 in a four stage programme), the Board of Examiners will base summative assessment including classification of award on the results available for the stage(s) not affected by the Aegrotat Pass.

- 8 Classification of Awards:  
Students who commenced their degree before the academic year 2007/08.
- 8.1 This section presents the principles that should guide Boards of Examiners in drawing up classification conventions for the award of undergraduate Degrees, Certificates and Diplomas for students who commenced their degree before the academic year 2007/08. Students who interrupt or repeat a period of study shall normally fall under the University Conventions and Procedures currently applicable upon the resumption of their studies.
- 8.2 *Award of an honours degree or lesser award.* The award of an honours degree of the University is dependent on the successful achievement of a programme which complies with the credit requirements detailed in the Levels and Awards Framework. Candidates who fail to meet the requirements for the award of an honours degree may be eligible for a lesser award – see paragraph 5.2 and also see the University [Levels and Awards Framework](#).
- 8.3 Awards are determined by the Examiners exercising their judgment of the class which best represents the candidate's achievement based on the overall level of performance. A Board of Examiners may, where it decides there are adequate grounds and in appropriate and fully documented circumstances, recommend raising a classification beyond that indicated by the profile of marks in accordance with the assessment conventions for the programme. The minutes of the Board of Examiners must clearly identify all such cases and provide a brief justification for the decision. All such decisions are subject to approval by the Faculty Board.
- 8.4 The marks achieved at stage 1 (for the first 120 credits of a programme) will not count towards classification or award unless the programme in question leads to an undergraduate Certificate.
- 8.5 Classification will be based on the student's profile of marks at stages 2, 3 and (where appropriate) 4 and the overall average marks obtained from these stages, in accordance with the conventions of the Board of Examiners for the programme (section 1.2).
- 8.6 The credit attached to modules will generate their weighting within a stage - i.e. a 30 credit module will contribute one quarter to the overall average or profile of marks of the stage of the programme in which it is taken.
- 8.7 The successful completion of a full year abroad should count as 120 credits towards the total credits accumulated for the award of a degree and the mark for the year abroad shall count no less than 30 credits towards the classification of that degree.
- 8.8 The programme's assessment procedures (section 1.2) will make clear the weighting to be given in classification to modules taken at stages 2, 3 and 4. It is not permitted for assessment procedures to give different weighting to modules of different levels within a single stage.

8.9 Where profiling systems are used - i.e. where marks are grouped into classification bands - students should receive a class which corresponds with the distribution of credits between the different classes. In cases where the final average mark suggests a different class from a profiled class, Boards of Examiners must consider whether the higher class should be awarded.

8.10 In assigning marks attained for individual modules in profiling, and also in evaluating overall averages, classifications correspond to the following percentages:

Class I	70% +
Class II, Division I	60-69%
Class II, Division II	50-59%
Class III	40-49%

8.11 Transcripts will always record the actual numerical marks obtained for modules (in case of two failures, the higher mark to be recorded). Marks for referred modules, where 40% is the maximum achievable, will also carry an indicator to specify that the mark has been capped at 40%.

9 Classification of Awards:  
Students who commenced their degree in or after the academic year 2007/08.

9.1 This section presents the conventions used to determine classification of the award of undergraduate Degrees, Certificates and Diplomas for those students who commenced their degree in or after the academic year 2007/08.

9.2 *Award of an honours degree or lesser award.* The award of an honours degree of the University is dependent on the successful achievement of a programme which complies with the credit requirements detailed in the Levels and Awards Framework. Candidates who fail to meet the requirements for the award of an honours degree may be eligible for a lesser award – see paragraph 5.2 and also see the University [Levels and Awards Framework](#).

9.3 Awards are determined by the Examiners exercising their judgment of the class which best represents the candidate's achievement based on the overall level of performance. A Board of Examiners may, where it decides there are adequate grounds and in appropriate and fully documented circumstances recommend raising a classification beyond that indicated by the profile of the marks. This would either be in a case where the mitigation committee request such consideration by the Examination Board or where an unexplained preponderance (at least 150 credits) of marks in a higher class appear to the Board to outweigh the normal requirements regarding the credit weighted average. The minutes of the Board of Examiners must clearly identify all such cases and provide a brief justification for the decision. All such decisions are subject to confirmation by the Faculty Dean on behalf of the Faculty Board.

9.4 The marks achieved at stage 1 (for the first 120 credits of a programme) will not count towards classification or award unless the programme in question leads to

an undergraduate Certificate or Diploma.

9.5 *Stage weighting:* The marks achieved for stage 1 will not count towards classification. The weighting of all other stages will contribute to the final weighted mark as follows:

- (a) Three year undergraduate programmes  
The combined average of the second and third stages weighted 1:2
- (b) Four year programmes with year abroad in Stage 2 \*  
The combined average of the second, third and fourth stages weighted 1:4:8
- (c) Four year programmes with year abroad in Stage 3 \*  
The combined average of the second, third and fourth stages weighted 4:2:8
- (d) Four year programmes with year abroad in Stage 4 \*  
The combined average of the second, third and fourth stages weighted 4:8:2

\* The term "Year abroad" here also includes other forms of study outside the University, such as industrial placements.

- (d) Four year programmes (integrated masters programmes)  
The combined average of the second, third and fourth stages weighted 2:3:4

9.6 *Final weighted mark:* The final weighted mark for the summative classification of the award is calculated from stage averages from all stages excluding stage 1, weighted according to the stage weighting above.

9.7 *Rules for classification:* The rules should be applied in descending order, starting at the Pass / Fail threshold, so that fail students are excluded from further consideration.

- (a) Pass / Fail threshold for the programme
  - The pass / fail threshold for the Stage is stage average of 40.00%
- (b) First
  - A final weighted mark greater than or equal to 68.00% and modules to the value of at least 50% of stage weighted credits with a module mark greater than or equal to 69.50%
  - or
  - A final weighted mark greater than or equal to 69.50%
- (c) Upper second
  - A final weighted mark greater than or equal to 58.00% and modules to the value of at least 50% of stage weighted credits with a module mark greater than or equal to 59.50%
  - or
  - A final weighted mark greater than or equal to 59.50%
- (d) Lower second

- A final weighted mark greater than or equal to 48.00% and modules to the value of at least 50% of stage weighted credits with a module mark greater than or equal to 49.50%

or

- A final weighted mark greater than or equal to 49.50%

(e) Third

- A final weighted mark greater than or equal to 39.50%

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