



LANCASTER UNIVERSITY SUB -DEGREE AWARDS REGULATIONS FOR REGIONAL TEACHING PARTNERS

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SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS, PRINCIPLES AND CONDITIONS FOR ALL SUB-DEGREE AWARDS

1. These regulations are specifically focused upon awards made below the level of degree: primarily, that is the University certificate in a named subject. These awards shall be no less than 30 credits, and cannot be worth 90 credits or more. University certificate awards shall form a coherent programme of study, with specified aims, learning outcomes, modules and assessment methods, described in a programme specification. These awards can be at level 4, 5, 6, or 7, and should feature modules at the same level in order to form a coherent award of that level.¹
2. The University certificate is an unclassified award, in a named subject.
3. In the assessment regulations below in section 3, assessment is the primary means whereby students demonstrate achievement so as to merit attainment of credit, usually as partial fulfilment of a named award. The ultimate authority for the regulation of assessment practice rests with the University Senate, which, in turn, may delegate operational authority to other constituent parts of the University or those institutions with which it enters into agreements.
4. The assessment regulations in section 3 below are defined as the collective rules governing the structures and processes under which assessment for Sub-Degree Awards is undertaken and managed within the college, while assessment content is defined as the pieces of work assigned as both formative and summative assessment, including, but not limited to: essays, examinations, oral presentations, practical assessments, performance, portfolios of work, poster presentations, etc.

1. The University currently offers the following Sub-Degree Awards for delivery by the colleges:

Main higher education award	Level of award	Fte period of Study (normal)	credit range
University certificate	4,5,6 or 7	Open	minimum of 30 at fheq level 4, less than 90 credits total.

2. All programmes leading to awards of the University must comply with criteria agreed by the University Senate in terms of level of study, duration of programmes, numbers of modules, student learning hours and credit frameworks. If contributing to or forming part of a subsequent award, all programmes must have defined, coherent pathways to that later award.

¹ Please note that UC awards must not comprise of modules at significantly different levels: e.g., it is expressly prohibited to construct a UC from modules at level 4 and level 6 or 7. Where modules are of contiguous levels, e.g. 4 & 5, consideration can be made on a case by case basis.

3. In addition to complying with the criteria agreed by the University Senate, all awards offered by the University and programmes delivered by the college are aligned with the framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland published by the QAA as well as the national credit framework, which aligns UK qualifications with European qualifications.

1C STRUCTURE OF PROGRAMMES

1. The named University Certificate shall comprise a defined number of modules, which together form a coherent award, with agreed programme aims, learning outcomes. For details on the module diet forming this award, please see footnote 1 above.

SECTION 2: ADMISSIONS, PROGRAMME APPROVAL AND REVALIDATION, PROGRAMME REVIEW AND CURRENCY OF AWARDS

2A RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

1. Please note that, due to the small credit value of an award, recognition of prior learning is expressly prohibited for these awards; prior credit cannot be used towards the award of a UC.

2B PROGRAMME VALIDATION AND REVALIDATION

1. Sub-Degree Award programmes shall be validated subject to an appropriately thoroughgoing approvals process at the partner college, and an attendant validation process. Further details on approvals can be found in the relevant section of the [programme design, development and approval guidance](#).
2. The same guidance applies for the subsequent revalidation of programmes, with the caveat that revalidation processes should be proportionate to the size and credit value of the programme(s) being revalidated.

1. Each approved module contributing to any programme of the college leading to an award of the University will incorporate a scheme of assessment which:

- (a) assesses student performance against the intended learning outcomes of the module;
- (b) includes an appropriate combination of formative and summative elements;
- (c) deploys forms of assessment appropriate to the intended learning outcomes of the module.

must follow a clear procedure for determining final marks and grades where the two markers are in disagreement, and there must be a clear audit trail to show how the final mark or grade was reached. For small disagreements, taking a simple average may be appropriate, but where the difference is significant (e.g. a difference of 10 percentage points or a full grade or more), and where the two markers remain unable to reconcile their differences even after discussion, an appropriate procedure is for the programme leader or other appropriate person to ask a third internal marker to adjudicate.

4. All examination scripts at all levels will be anonymously marked, whereby the identity of students is masked from markers.
5. Judgement will be made through direct reference to the primary level descriptors for intended learning outcomes as set out in **table a**. Colleges are encouraged to amplify the primary level descriptors with more detailed secondary level descriptors specific to a particular field or level of study. It is permissible to have several sets of grade descriptors appropriate to the different types and levels of assessment. For the purposes of classification these grades will then be converted into aggregation scores with reference to the conversion scheme in **table a**.
6. Where the outcome of the chosen mode of assessment can be demonstrated to be wholly quantitative, i.e. comprised of elements which collectively can be demonstrated to be sufficiently granular so as to be accurately graded against a one hundred percent outcome, percentile assessment is permissible. Percentage marks will then be converted into a final aggregation score by reference to the conversion scheme in **table b**. For modules which are assessed by wholly quantitative assessments, the module mean as a percentage will initially be determined and this then converted to a module aggregation score.
7. For qualitative assessment where a piece of work merits a pass grade, markers should initially assign the grade in the middle of the appropriate class to a piece of work and then deliberately revise up or down if felt appropriate. For example, the upper second class is covered by grades b⁺, b and b⁻ (17, 16 and 15 points respectively). If a piece of work is judged to match the intended learning outcomes of an upper second then the default should be to award the work a b grade and then only consider changing to either b⁺ or b⁻ if the work shows particular strengths (b⁺) or weaknesses (b⁻).
8. Under certain circumstances it may be appropriate for marks to be scaled. See appendix 2 of these regulations for details of when and how scaling might be applied.
9. Where the assessment scheme for a specific module comprises two or more individual pieces of assessment, each piece should normally be awarded a grade as set out in the preceding paragraphs and each grade subsequently converted to an individual aggregation score as defined in the grading table.
10. Aggregation to establish a result for a module will require the computation of the mean of the relevant aggregation scores of the component assessments. Where appropriate the computation will employ weights as specified in the course documentation. The overall aggregation score for the module will be used for the purposes of calculating the final overall mean and hence award classification.
11. Academic judgements on all forms of assessment (examination, practical/ professional competency, written submission, etc.), subject to the moderation arrangements described above and confirmed through examining bodies or equivalent, are final and cannot be disputed by students. Nor can academic judgement form the basis of an academic appeal or student complaint. Procedures for academic appeals are described in

appendix 3 below). The exceptional circumstances committee would be required to meet at least once per annum prior to the final examining bodies, but might usefully meet to consider claims of good cause on a more frequent basis. The exceptional circumstances committee will produce minutes of its meetings to be submitted to the appropriate examination body.

Guidance on the management and operation of the college exceptional circumstances committees (or equivalent) can be found in the relevant college procedures, bb25w

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- x Formal approval of recommendations from boards of examiners that students be awarded no degree with or without a further re-sit opportunity (i.e. fails).

Further procedural details are set out in **appendix 3**.

3. For each programme approved by the University there will be an examination board comprising external and internal examiners which will be responsible for the assurance of standards through the exercise of their academic judgement both directly in the assessment of students' work and indirectly in the design of specific forms of assessment. The constitution and terms of reference for examination bodies within the regional teaching partners are approved by the University.
4. The boards of examiners will receive decisions from the colleges' equivalent of the exceptional circumstances committee. Boards of examiners cannot, of themselves, reconsider or change decisions of that body. Boards of examiners may challenge such decisions by referring final decisions to the University committee of Senate via the classification and assessment review board, or equivalent body.
5. Internal college examination boards will make decisions on matters of progression, exclusion, reassessment and/or repeating of study for all stages of awards other than the final stage leading to the award. The University shall have a right to attend such boards on request and to receive copies of the minutes of meetings. Details of the role and operation of these boards can be found in the relevant college procedures, as approved by the University.
- 6.

1. The determination of final results of University awards are subject always to ratification by the University committee of Senate and will be regarded as provisional until ratified.
2. With the exception of special cases recommended to the University committee of Senate via the classification and assessment review board, the college may notify students of their provisional results following the college board, but these results are not final until ratified by the committee of Senate.
3. Following ratification of award results, the college will provide students with a higher education academic record (hear) or transcript of their results which will conform in scope and layout to principles agreed by University Senate.
4. The University is responsible for producing and issuing certificates for all awards, which will be distributed according to agreed procedures.

1. It is University policy that no student shall be given an unfair advantage over fellow students through being allowed to automatically repeat individual modules, periods of study or a whole programme of study.
2. It is University policy that no student shall normally be allowed to automatically replace modules in which they have failed or performed poorly by taking a different module in order to achieve better marks.
3. Exceptional permission to repeat or replace elements of study may be granted in cases where a student's academic performance has been adversely affected by personal, health or financial problems and where such cases have been properly documented. Such permission may be granted by the relevant college-level committee/board responsible for the review of students' results, the relevant committee/board responsible for the consideration of intercalations or by the relevant person/body in the college with responsibility for hearing student appeals at the final stage.

1. The University agrees academic appeals procedures with each college that are equivalent to the University's own procedures and are based on the principles underlying the University procedures. The right of appeal is available to all students who:
 - (a) Have failed to qualify to proceed from one stage of a degree programme to the next;
 - (b) Have failed to qualify for the award of the degree for which they were registered;
 - (c) Wish to challenge, on procedural grounds, the award of a degree.

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- (b) Significant extenuating circumstances which adversely affected the student's performance and results;
- (c) Unfair treatment or discrimination, outwith the exercise of academic judgement;

3. Following completion of the college's academic appeals procedures, students have a final right of appeal to the University under its academic appeals procedures.

Grading table a				
Broad descriptor	Grade	Aggregation Score	Primary level descriptors for attainment of Intended learning outcomes	
Excellent	A+	24	Exemplary range and depth of attainment of intended learning outcomes, secured by discriminating command of a comprehensive range of relevant materials and analyses, and by deployment of considered judgement relating to key issues, concepts and procedures	pass
	A	21		
	A-	18		
Good	B+	17	Conclusive attainment of virtually all intended learning outcomes, clearly grounded on a close familiarity with a wide range of supporting evidence, constructively utilised to reveal appreciable depth of understanding	
	B	16		
	B-	15		
Satisfactory	C+	14	Clear attainment of most of the intended learning outcomes, some more securely grasped than others, resting on a circumscribed range of evidence and displaying a variable depth of understanding	
	C	13		
	C-	12		
Weak	D+	11	Acceptable attainment of intended learning outcomes, displaying a qualified familiarity with a minimally sufficient range of relevant materials, and a grasp of the analytical issues and concepts which is generally reasonable, albeit insecure	
	D	10		
	D-	9		
Marginal fail	F1	7	Attainment deficient in respect of specific intended learning outcomes, with mixed evidence as to the depth of knowledge and weak deployment of arguments or deficient manipulations	Fail
Fail	F2	4	Attainment of intended learning outcomes appreciably deficient in critical respects, lacking secure basis in relevant factual and analytical dimensions	
Poor fail	F3	2	Attainment of intended learning outcomes appreciably deficient in respect of nearly all intended learning outcomes, with irrelevant use of materials and incomplete and flawed explanation	
Very poor fail	F4	0	No convincing evidence of attainment of any intended learning outcomes, such treatment of the subject as is in evidence being directionless and fragmentary	

Note: for a grade to be awarded, students must also satisfy the primary level descriptors listed in the grades at all levels below that which is awarded (i.e. descriptors are to be read cumulatively up to and including the grade achieved).

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APPENDIX 1

LATE PENALTIES FOR ASSESSED WORK

For **work assessed using letter grades**, work submitted up to three days late without an agreed extension will receive a penalty of one full grade and zero (non-submission) thereafter. Thus, for example, A- becomes B-, C+ becomes D+. All work marked with a D grade (D+/D/D-) will be reduced to F1 where a late penalty is to be imposed while F1 becomes F2, F2 becomes F3, and F3 becomes F4. Saturdays and Sundays are included as days in this regulation; however, where the third day falls on a Saturday or Sunday, students will have until 10.00 a.m. on Monday to hand in without receiving further penalty. Where the application of a late submission penalty results in a Fail mark, the assessment will be treated according to the standard procedures for failed work.

For **work assessed using percentages**, marks between 50% and 69% will be reduced by ten percentage points for example a mark of 62% would become 52%). Other marks will be reduced according to the following table.

Original mark	Mark after penalty
87-100	68
74-86	65
70-73	62
40-49	31
31-39	18
18-30	9
0-17	0

APPENDIX 2

GUIDANCE FOR SCALING OF MARKS

1. All assessments and marking schemes should be created with the aim of ensuring that the resulting grades/marks give a good indication of the ability and application of the students. However, it is inevitable that on occasion this will not work as planned.
2. Reasons may include a misprinted examination paper, the interruption of an examination or, in a science laboratory, an instrumental malfunction not obvious at the time of the experiment; or it may simply be that examiners agree, using their academic judgment and with the benefit of hindsight, that an assessment, or part of an assessment, proved to be significantly harder or easier than expected.
3. In such cases it is appropriate to consider whether the marks should be scaled.



