

**Emergency Supplementary Marks & Standards for all Postgraduate Taught Masters Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, Higher Diploma, Professional Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate Examinations (Full-time and Part-time) and the LLB.**

*These Supplementary Marks & Standards apply for Academic Year 2020/2021 only and have been developed in response to the global COVID-19 emergency. They are a timelimited revision to policy number QA236.*

This year's exams and assessments are taking place under the extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 emergency. We understand the enormous disruption and stress that this emergency has caused for our students. In recent times, much effort, time and consultation has gone into the preparation of suitable means of assessing students, albeit through alternative mechanisms. To support you in the move to online assessments, we are as a consequence making some temporary adjustments to our normal Marks and Standards. These adjustments – none of which have been made lightly – seek to balance the principles of support, integrity and flexibility.

*Support:* We aim to be as supportive as possible of you, our students, as you undertake assessments under unfamiliar and difficult conditions.

*Integrity:* We aim to maintain the integrity of our assessments and by extension the integrity of your degree.

*Flexibility:* Recognising that unforeseen circumstances are inevitable – including the possibility of student or staff illness – we have introduced some limited forms of flexibility to help ensure that your progression or graduation is not unnecessarily impeded.

Whilst recognising the exceptional circumstances surrounding the assessment process this year, it is important to ensure consistent standards with previous years. Notwithstanding the exceptional circumstances, Exam Boards should function as normal and compare the overall grade distribution in student programme cohorts to previous years and consider rescaling if there are clear discrepancies with overall normal results at a Programme level, as per their standard practice when looking at individual module marks.

### **Summary of Emergency Provisions**

1. The Examination period will be extended, if necessary into the summermonths.

2. Face-to-face exams maybe replaced by alternative exams and/or modes of assessment.
3. Where documents must be uploaded after timed exams additional time will be allowed to upload the documents.
4. Exam Boards maybe held remotely.
5. Recognising the exceptional circumstances, the Executive Dean of College may provide written authorization for students to carry a maximum of 15% deficit of the overall programme weighting from modules examined in semester 1 or semester 2 of the Academic Year 2020/2021 and subsequently failed in Autumn repeat examinations into the next year of study, subject to terms and conditions..
6. Students who fail or do not complete a module will only be required to repeat the parts of a module not already completed.
7. Except where decided by the Exam Security Group, there will be no capping of repeat exams for any modules in the 2020-2021 academic year.
8. Exam security will be protected by asking all students to complete a disclaimer statement at the start of each exam and each module leader reserves the right to follow up with a student by interview if there is any concern in relation to the integrity of the exam.
9. Boards will consider the rescaling of marks if there are clear discrepancies with overall normal results at a Programme level, as per their standard practice when looking at individual module marks.

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## 1. Introduction

These general regulations apply to all Postgraduate Taught Masters' Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, Higher Diploma, Professional Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate (Full-time and Part-time) programmes in the University. Every Postgraduate Taught Masters' Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, Higher Diploma, Professional Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate (Full-time and Part-time) programme **must comply** with these regulations unless otherwise provided as per section 10 below. Students must also refer to the specific College programme regulations and requirements.

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These regulations are approved by the University's Academic Council and are regulated and reviewed by the Academic Council's Standing Committee, following prior consideration by the Academic Regulations Committee. The Academic Regulations Committee is comprised of the Deputy President and Registrar (Chair), Deans of College, another representative from each College and the Director of Lifelong Learning. Relevant administrative staff are in attendance at the Committee's meetings. The Committee reports to Standing Committee of Academic Council.

## 2. Programme Curricula

The University's programmes are organised in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). **Programmes** of study are organised into specific units of study called **Modules**. Each Module is a unit of teaching and learning formally offered within the University, and carrying credit expressed as a number of credit points in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System.

A programme has a prescribed aggregate credit value in accordance with the Level of Study as set out in Ireland's National Framework for Qualifications, NFQ. Programmes have prescribed Learning Outcomes for each module and for the overall programme. **Module Descriptions and Weightings**

## 3. Module Descriptions

**Module Descriptions** will be specified in the University's central **Module Repository** (or "Module Manager" System) and be set out in the **Programme Descriptions and Regulations** for each College's programmes.

Individual modules will have an ECTS credit weighting of 5 ECTS, but may be expressed in whole multiples of 5 ECTS where good academic practice requires larger units of study.

Credit is awarded to students who obtain a minimum of 40% on a module (see also provisions on compensation at 5.5 below).

#### 4. Arrangements for Assessment and Formal Examination

The Examination Period for examinations in AY 2020/2021 may be extended to include the summer months, and where necessary, into Semester 1 of AY 2021/22.

The University's standard examination periods for Taught Postgraduate Programmes are

- End of Semester 1
- End of Semester 2
- August, in respect of programmes provided over 3 semesters and ending in August
- Repeat (of Semester 1 and 2) Examinations (August).

The holding of examinations outside of these periods requires the prior approval of the Academic Regulations Committee.

Repeat examinations will be held for all programmes and modules unless the prior approval of the Academic Regulations Committee for repeat examinations not to be held is given. Repeat examinations for modules examined in Semester 1 and Semester 2 will be held in August. Repeat examinations for modules examined in August will not be held until the following August.

Some Postgraduate Taught Masters' Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, Higher Diploma, Professional Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate (Full-time and Part-time) programmes are provided over three semesters, ending in August, and there will be requirements in respect of such programmes for the submission of material for examination in August or September.

Modules may be assessed in any combination of formal examinations, minor dissertation, assignments, projects, essays, papers, reports, presentations & debates, locally set exercises, laboratory or field work, or other experiential learning.

For examinations, formal face-to-face examinations maybe replaced with alternative examinations. Alternative examinations will be conducted remotely using a range of exam modes including online exams run through Blackboard, Multiple-Choice Questions, take-home open-book exams, continuous assessment, projects, presentations delivered remotely via video, andmore.

For Alternative Assessments by timetabled examination in 2020/2021, the examination will be no more than the **standard two hours' duration**, and should be finished in this time. In examinations where diagrams/drawings or any documents are required to be scanned and uploaded with the online exam script, 30 minutes will be allocated to allow for the

uploading of the full exam script.

Where a module weighting is greater than 5 ECTS, the formal examination may be broken into a number of 2 hour papers or one 2 hour paper and alternate assessment methods (e.g. a 10 credit module might attract two 2 hour examinations). In exceptional circumstances, where robust academic assessment reasons require longer examinations, 3-hour (or longer) examinations may be facilitated.

## 5. Time Limit for Completion of Programmes

Colleges will set out in Programme Regulations the time limit within which Postgraduate Taught Masters' Degree, Postgraduate Diploma, Higher Diploma, Professional Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate (Full-time and Part-time) programmes must be completed. Credit gained for particular modules will lapse at the end of the prescribed time-limit period unless the College provides otherwise.

## 6. Passing and Progression

The Examination Board is the formal examination authority for each College and examination session. Chaired by the Dean, the Board is made-up of academic staff members of the College and external examiners from the relevant disciplines, or from the Colleges responsible for multi-College programmes. For Semester 2 Examinations Boards may take place remotely via video conferencing facilities. Only those decisions approved by the Examinations Board will be formally recognised as official University examination results, relating to Passing, Progression, Determination of Honours, and Granting of Deferrals.

**Examination Boards will be held on completion of a programme and at the end of each programme year.** The Examination Board held on completion of the programme will determine the overall result and will apply compensation provisions. The Examination Board held at the end of a programme year will determine eligibility to proceed to the next programme year.

### 6.1. Progression

Where a programme is taught over more than one year there will normally be a requirement that the previous year be satisfactorily completed before the student registers for a subsequent year.

Recognising the exceptional circumstances, the Executive Dean of College may provide written authorization for students to carry a maximum of 15% deficit of the overall programme weighting from modules examined in semester 1 or semester 2 of the Academic Year 2020/2021 and subsequently failed in Autumn repeat examinations into the next year of study, subject to terms and conditions.

## 6.2. Passing

**The pass mark on all modules is 40%.** Where different components of assessment (course work, laboratory work, continuous assessment, final assessment, etc.) within a module

**A mark of 'Incomplete' must be returned to the Examinations Office where there is a requirement that an element(s) of a module be passed and that element(s) is not passed. A student is only required to retake those elements of an incomplete module that were incomplete.** The module owner will advise students of those components that were incomplete.

College level provisions should be the same across all programmes and modules in a College.

## 6.3. Carrying Forward Marks

A student will be given credit for modules passed and will not have to represent for examination in any module in which a minimum mark of 40% has been returned within the time limit set out in regulations for the successful completion of the programme (see section 5 above).

## 6.4. Material Assessed at Repeat Examinations

Marks for components of a module (i.e. sub-module assessment elements) from previous attempt(s) will carry forward from one assessment to the next.

## 6.5. Compensation Provision for Programmes of One Year Duration

Compensation will only be applied in cases where its application enables the student to successfully complete the programme as a whole.

The pass standard for a Module is 40%. However, a student with marks of less than 40% in one or more modules will be deemed to have passed the programme provided

- the aggregate mark for all modules is at least 40% **and**
  - the mark in every module is 35% or more **and**
  - the module(s) with marks in the range 35-39% total
1. not more than 5 ECTS in the case of programmes with an ECTS weighting of 30 –55
  2. not more than 10 ECTS in the case of programmes with an ECTS weighting in the range 60 - 85
  3. not more than 15 ECTS in the case of programmes with an ECTS weighting of 90 or above.

Note: compensation provision will not apply in the case of programmes with an ECTS weighting of less than 30.

The carrying forward of marks does not invalidate the potential for compensation provision.

Where a module has been passed by compensation the mark for the module will appear on transcripts with a grade of Pass by Compensation.

In some programmes, Compensation may not be allowed in core or mandatory prescribed modules or groups of modules, as to do so would undermine the achievement of the learning outcomes for the Programme. These specific regulations will be set out in the College's **Programme Descriptions and Regulations** for the relevant degree programmes.

#### **6.6. Compensation Provision for Programmes of More than One Year's Duration and the Part-time LLB.**

In the case of programmes of more than one year duration compensation will be applied, provided the following criteria are met.

The pass standard for a Module is 40%. However, a student with marks of less than 40% in one or more modules will be deemed to have passed the stage (year) of the programme provided:

- the aggregate mark for all modules is at least 40% **and**
  - the mark in every module is 35% or more **and**
  - the module(s) with marks in the range 35-39% total
1. not more than 5 ECTS in the case of programmes with an ECTS weighting of 30 – 55 for the stage (year).
  2. not more than 10 ECTS in the case of programmes with an ECTS weighting in the range 60 – 85 for the stage (year).

Compensation is only applied when the overall mark is being calculated at the completion of a stage (year). If, after the end of year Examination Board (June) for first sitting of examinations results (i.e. Semester 1 and Semester 2 examinations), a student has marks in the range 35-39% in excess of the permitted compensation provision ECTS for that stage (year) of the programme, as outlined in bullet points 1-2 above, he/she will be required to re-sit all modules with a mark of less than 40% at the second sitting examinations (i.e. August repeat examinations).

In some programmes, Compensation may not be allowed in core or mandatory prescribed modules or groups of modules, as to do so would undermine the achievement of the learning outcomes for the Programme. These specific regulations will be set out in the College's **Programme Descriptions and Regulations** for the relevant degree programmes.

## 6.7. Capping of Examination Marks

### ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021

Due to the exceptional circumstances, there will be no capping of marks on repeat examinations for academic year 2020/2021 resits, except where decided by the Exam Security Group and/or Plagiarism Officer/Advisor. The provisions below of this section therefore do not apply.

With effect from the academic year 2015/16 the maximum mark which may be awarded at a repeat examination of a module will be the pass mark for the module, viz. 40%.

There are exceptions in the case of some modules in programmes in the School of Nursing and the Master of Accounting programme in the J E Cairns School of Business and Accounting, where the maximum mark which may be awarded will be 50%, viz. the pass mark for modules on those programmes. Information on these modules/programmes is available from the Schools.

Capping will be applied to postgraduate taught programmes as follows:

Capping applies to students who are returning to complete a taught postgraduate programme after having availed of a period of leave-of-absence, or other such gap in their studies, whether or not such leave was approved by the University

Capping will apply in all cases, as outlined above, unless a deferral has been granted, see Section 9 of this document regarding the University's Deferral Application Procedures.

## 6.8. Examination Integrity

Exam security will be protected by asking all students to complete a disclaimer statement at the start of each exam and each module leader reserves the right to follow up with a student by interview if there is any concern in relation to the integrity of the exam.

## 7. Award of Honours

Honours are awarded only on completion of the programme according to the following scheme:

H1 70% on the aggregate H2.1 60% on the aggregate H2.2 50% on the aggregate H3 40% on the aggregate

Note (1): Honours are awarded only on the aggregate performance at an Examination as a whole. Honours are not awarded on the basis of results obtained in individual modules.

Note (2): Credit awarded on the basis of a prior award or on the basis of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will be grade neutral and will not be taken into account in the calculation of honours.

## 8. Deferral Provision

Application for permission to defer taking a module or modules to a subsequent examination session must be made in accordance with the Deferral Application Procedures of the University, as outlined in the Deferral of Examinations Guidelines for students:

[Deferral of Examinations – A Guide for Students](#)

## 9. Transcripts

Student transcripts will include details of all modules for which a mark has been entered. The Programme Honours Standard reported will be as for the grade bands set in 6 above. The only additional or alternative annotations will be:

- Exempt
- Absent
- Pass
- Pass by Compensation
- Deferred
- Incomplete
- Audit
- Fail

## 10. Dealing with Exceptions or Deviations

Only in exceptional circumstances will deviations be permitted from these regulations. A **structural deviation** is a significant and permanent change to these regulations which might be authorised for one or more programmes. Where a **structural deviation** is required for sound academic purposes, application must be made to the Academic Regulations Committee of Academic Council's Standing Committee, which shall recommend to Academic Council Standing Committee in the matter of applications received. A **concession** is the granting of explicit permission by the Standing Committee, following consideration and recommendation by the Academic Regulations Committee, to permit the deviation of a programme of study from these prescribed regulations. A **concession** may be required in occasional circumstances and will be a matter for Academic Council Standing Committee, following consideration and recommendation by the Academic Regulations Committee.