



University Assessment Regulations

Taught Postgraduate Programmes

Academic Session 2018-19

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Version	Date issued	Author	Update information
V1.0	14.07.2014	Governance and Quality Enhancement	First Published version
V1.1	10.10.2014	Governance and Quality Enhancement	Typographical amendment to section 19.
V 1.2	07.11.2014	Governance and Quality Enhancement	At 25.6a text changed from “non-General Student visa (student visitor visa)” to “appropriate visa”.
V 1.3	07.05.2015	Governance and Quality Enhancement	Correction to contents page and referencing under section 20 <i>Oral Assessments</i> .
V2.0	25.08.2015	Governance	Text incorporating Integrated Masters in the Undergraduate Assessment Regulations added in paragraphs 1.1, 1.4, 1.5 and 13.1.5 (paragraphs 1.4-1.6 become 1.5-1.7).
V2.0	25.08.2015	Governance	At 2.10 Associated policy retitled <i>Policy and Procedures for Examination Papers</i>
V2.0	1.09.2015	Governance	At 2.5 <i>Regulations Regarding Plagiarism and Cheating</i> changed to <i>Code of Student Conduct</i>
V2.0	15.09.2015	Governance	At 13.3 and 13.3.1 parantheses added to allow for nullification at level 11 in Integrated Masters Programmes
V2.0	15.09.2015	Governance	Clarification clause added at 13.2.3 “ <i>and where no more than 20 credits have been failed at that level.</i> ”
V2.0	30.09.2015	Governance	At 25.6a text changed from ““appropriate visa” to “Short Term Study Visit Visa”.
V3.0	15.09.2016	Academic Quality and Development	At 9.5, Section (f) added to require module handbooks for exchange/mobility modules to make explicit arrangements for
			At 25.3, the ability to progress on a generic degree pathway is removed.
			Revision to Section 11.1, 11.2, 11.4-7 to clarify the wording and expectation of double marking and moderation.
			Revision to Section 11.3 in relation to marking of all questions answered in coursework or examinations.

			<p>Page 6, footnote 2, minor amendment to reference to GCU Credit Control and Debt Management Policy.</p>
			<p>Departmental Titles/Role titles updated</p>
			<p>Section 13, amendments and guidance as to the use of nullification regulations.</p>
V3.1	01.09.2017	Academic Quality and Development	<p>Section 13.3, further amendments and guidance as to the use of nullification regulations.</p> <p>Section 25, amendments made to school-based generic awards</p> <p>Reference to new GCU Moderation Policy made at 2.17</p>
V3.2	01.09.2018	Academic Quality and Development	<p>Section 13.1 and 13.2.7, amendments and guidance with regards to the implementation of threshold minimum marks for all elements of assessment at SCQF level 11 (new students)</p>

University Assessment Regulations

Taught Postgraduate Programmes

CONTENTS

1.	GENERAL	2
2.	SPECIFIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	3
3.	NOTES OF GUIDANCE	4
4.	ASSESSMENT AND ACADEMIC JUDGEMENT	4
5.	ELIGIBILITY FOR ASSESSMENT	5
6.	ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS	5
7.	MAXIMUM PERIOD OF REGISTRATION	5
8.	WITHDRAWAL OF A STUDENT FROM A PROGRAMME.....	6
9.	SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT	6
10.	COURSEWORK – LATE SUBMISSION AND FAILURE TO SUBMIT.....	8
11.	MARKING AND MODERATION	9
12.	ENTRY OF MARKS	10
13.	AWARDING OF CREDIT FOR MODULES	10
14.	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ATTEMPTS AT A MODULE	14
15.	FAILURE AT THE FIRST DIET	14
16.	ACCUMULATED CREDIT AND REPETITION OF MODULES.....	14
17.	AWARDS	15
18.	MERIT OR DISTINCTION	15
19.	ORAL ASSESSMENT	16
20.	ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS.....	16
21.	VALID REASONS FOR POOR PERFORMANCE AT ANY LEVEL	17
22.	AEGROTAT AWARDS	17
23.	STUDENTS NOTIFIED BY THE FINANCE OFFICE AS DEBTORS	17
24.	SCHOOL-BASED GENERIC AWARDS – REPLACEMENT OF MODULES.....	17

1. General

1.1 All Programme and Assessment Boards must follow the Assessment Regulations of Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) unless any exceptions from these regulations have been approved. Programme Boards must state in their programme specification and programme documentation, either:

- i) 'there are no exceptions from the University's Assessment Regulations';
- or,
- ii) 'there are exceptions from the University's Assessment Regulations, and that these are details in sections...';

This statement in the programme documentation, plus the University Assessment Regulations and in the case of ii), any specified exceptions, constitute the Programme Assessment Regulations.¹

1.2 All exceptions from the University Assessment Regulations must receive formal approval by the University. Any proposed Exceptions are first submitted to the Department of Academic Quality and Development for consideration and advice. Thereafter they may be submitted to the University Exceptions Committee for consideration. The date and reference of each approved exception from the University Assessment Regulations must be included in the programme documentation.

1.3 All exceptions from the University Assessment Regulations must be specified in sufficient detail to ensure that consequential exceptions from the University Assessment Regulations are specified.

1.4 Staff must ensure that students have available to them the University Assessment Regulations and, in the programme documentation, any exceptions, or, in the case of Integrated Masters programmes, any additions and/or deviations from the regulations that are specific to their programme. Students have a responsibility to be aware of such regulations.

1.6 The University Assessment Regulations may be subject to over-riding requirements from agencies of relevance to the operation of the university.

1.7 The University reserves the right to make reasonable changes to the regulations where in the opinion of the University those changes will assist in the proper delivery of education. The University will normally maintain the Assessment Regulations for students within an academic session. However, the University reserves the right to introduce changes during the academic session when it reasonable considers those changes are: either, for the maintenance of academic standards; or, required to secure the University's good operation and legal or regulatory compliance. Appropriate prior notice of changes will be given.

¹ For the purposes of this document, **Programme Assessment Regulations are defined as:** University Assessment Regulations plus any approved exceptions

2. Specific Policies and Procedures

- 2.1 There are several specific Policies and Procedures forming part of the Assessment Regulations.
- 2.2 Assessment Boards will be constituted and will operate as specified in the *Terms of Reference and Standard Operations of Assessment Boards*.
- 2.3 The Appointment and duties of External Examiners is specified in the procedure entitled *Regulations for the Appointment of and Responsibilities of External Examiners*.
- 2.4 The procedure for the consideration of mitigating circumstances is specified in the document entitled *Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances*.
- 2.5 Situations involving potential Plagiarism and Cheating will be processed under the *Code of Student Conduct*.
- 2.6 A student who wishes to exercise their right to appeal must do so in line with the *Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures*.
- 2.7 The *Credit Control and Debt Management Policy* contains regulations that an integral part of the Assessment Regulations.
- 2.8 Written Examinations will be conducted in line with: the *Scheme of Invigilation*; and *Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations*.
- 2.9 Special Examination Arrangements are detailed in: *Policy for Alternative & Special Examination Requirements*.
- 2.10 The *Policy & Procedures for the Examination Papers* specify procedures for written examinations including the procedure for anonymous marking of formal written examinations and the retention of completed assessment material.
- 2.11 The *Graduation and Awards Regulations* specify the regulations and processes of Graduation.
- 2.12 The *Policy on Project and Dissertation Supervision* specifies the processes that should be followed.
- 2.13 Whilst the *Student Attendance Monitoring Policy*, and the *Student Performance Feedback Policy* extend beyond the regulations, they have a direct impact on student assessment.
- 2.14 Any exemptions for these Assessment Regulations must be approved by the Exceptions Subcommittee of the Academic Policy and Practice Committee. Guidance is in *Procedures for applying for an exception to the University Assessment Regulations*.
- 2.15 Glasgow Caledonian University's *Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (RPL)* describes how RPL credit may be used to contribute to an award.

- 2.16 Regulations for registration, suspension of studies and withdrawal are detailed in [Taught Student Registration, Suspension of Studies and Withdrawal](#).
- 2.17 The [GCU Moderation Policy](#) contains regulations that are an integral part of the Assessment Regulations.

3. Notes of Guidance

- 3.1 Notes of Guidance set out examples of good practice, approved by Senate. Whilst they are not viewed as necessarily part of the assessment regulations, all staff must consider such Guidance.
- 3.2 Relevant Guidance is contained in *Assessment Preparation Guidance for Academic Staff* as follows:
- Guidance Notes on Assessment Loading.
 - Notes of Guidance to Academic Staff on Information to be provided to Students to assist their Preparation for Assessments.

4. Assessment and Academic Judgement

- 4.1 The purpose of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the programmes of study and have achieved the standard required for the award they seek. Assessment Boards are responsible to Senate, and Senate requires all programmes of study to be subject to assessment regulations. It is within these Programme Assessment Regulations that Assessment Boards make their judgement on student performance. Failure to adhere to the regulations may: i) put the University at unacceptable risk; ii) threaten the standards of its awards; iii) run counter to principles of natural justice; iv) be in breach of external legislation; v) be in breach of requirements imposed by external agencies; and, vi) jeopardise the quality of the student experience.
- 4.2 Within the constraints imposed by the Senate requirements of paragraph 4.1 above, Assessment Boards have academic discretion in reaching decisions on the awards to be recommended for individual students. Regulations cannot be expected to legislate for every eventuality. The Assessment Boards are responsible for interpreting sensibly the assessment regulations for a programme if any difficulties arise. Academic judgements, which are properly justified and fully recorded in the minutes, may override strict regulatory interpretation. However academic judgement cannot be used as a justification to downgrade any credit, mark or degree classification achieved by all normal regulatory calculations or used to prevent progression or compensation permissible under the Programme Assessment Regulations².

² Assessment Boards may obtain guidance on the interpretation of the regulations from the Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment and Exams) or the Department of Academic Quality and Development.

- 4.3 Students have the right of Appeal regarding an Assessment Board decision. The conditions and process of Appeal are detailed in the *Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures*.

5. Eligibility for Assessment

- 5.1 Students eligible for assessment are those who have complied in all respects with the conditions for admission and registration to the programme and/or all relevant modules within the programme. Such conditions include the payment of relevant fees³ and compliance with such other requirements as may be prescribed from time to time. No person whose registration has lapsed, or who has failed to register for the appropriate programme and associated modules, is eligible as a candidate for assessment. Assessment Boards will withhold the marks of an assessment of any person who appears ineligible pending an investigation and may ultimately disregard the attempt.
- 5.2 All eligible registered students shall be entitled to enter the first diet of assessments on completion of the normal programme of study without a special entry procedure and without payment of an additional fee. Absence from any assessment without good cause and supporting evidence shall be deemed to be an attempt.

6. Attendance Requirements

- 6.1 Where a student has failed to meet the minimum attendance requirements (as detailed in module descriptor, programme regulations and student handbooks) the Assessment Board may decide that the student be required to re-enter the module with attendance or, on the basis of the individual's overall performance, that an alternative form of action may be more appropriate within the framework of the University Assessment Regulations.

7. Maximum Period of Registration

- 7.1 The maximum period of study is:
- In the case of an award for which the period of study is specified as 2 years or less, the period can be extended by a maximum of 1 year; and,
 - In the case of awards for which the period of study is specified as 3 years or more, the period can be extended by a maximum of 2 years.
- 7.2 Regulation 7.1 applies to both full-time and part-time programmes. In the case of part-time programmes the specified duration of part-time study should be used as the basis for determining that maximum extension.

³ The GCU Credit Control and Debt Management Policy lists sanctions which may be applied to students with overdue debt.

8. Withdrawal of a student from a programme

8.1 An Assessment Board may require an undergraduate student to withdraw from their programme provided that:

- i) there is evidence that the student has failed to engage with the programme;
- ii) and/or the Board is fully satisfied, both on the basis of assessment evidence and of tutors' reports, that the student concerned would be unable to benefit from the programme.
- iii) and/or the length of study has reached the maximum period of registration.

The Assessment Board minutes must show which of the above criteria has/have been applied.

8.2 An Assessment Board may, exceptionally, require a candidate to withdraw from a programme after a first diet. There must be clear grounds based on the criteria in 8.1 and the Assessment Board minutes must show which criteria has/have been applied.

8.3 In all instances where a candidate has been withdrawn from a programme, the student must be offered guidance, advice and support as to their future options. Such guidance, advice and support will normally be provided by the student's Personal Tutor, or, where this is not possible, by another appropriate member of academic staff who is an officer of the programme concerned.

8.4 In line with regulation 4.3, a student has the right of Appeal of a decision of an Assessment Board regarding Withdrawal from a programme.

9. Scheme of Assessment

9.1 During each Academic Session (September-June) there will be a first and second diet assessment for all modules at SCQF level11.

9.2 Modules will be assessed during the trimester(s) in which they have been completed.

9.3 Resit assessments for modules delivered in Trimesters A and/or B will be held prior to the start of the next Academic Session.

9.4 Entry to a second diet of assessments, shall be subject to such procedures and the Senate may approve from time to time and to such additional fees as the University Court may from time to time determine.

9.5 Programme and module handbooks shall specify for each level of the programme/module:

- a) the modules to be assessed;
- b) where applicable, the percentage marks awarded to each discrete element of the assessment for each module;
- c) the conditions necessary to satisfy the Examiners in any one module;

- d) the number and level of the credit points earned for each module when the assessment criteria are satisfied;
 - e) that, for modules undertaken for the purposes of mobility/exchange a handbook is issued to students. This handbook should also be issued to exchange/mobility coordinators. It is required that explicit arrangements for the calculation and reporting of the mark achieved (i.e. the equivalency to be applied at GCU for reporting to Assessment Boards for the purposes of progression and/or final award decision), are contained within the handbook.
- 9.6 Where appropriate, Assessment Boards may modify the form of assessment for individual students.
- 9.7 The Programme Board must be satisfied that, for each module, the coursework/laboratory schedule is made available to students at the beginning of each trimester and that students are informed of the submission dates for that module. Under normal circumstances, it is expected that the Module Leader will perform this duty, using the guidance contained within Assessment Preparation Guidance for Academic Staff, as a template. It is the responsibility of the Module Leader to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for the recording of the receipt of coursework from students.
- 9.8 Where there are sound academic and Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body reasons, Programme Boards may seek approval from the School Board for a minimum attendance requirement in respect of specific modules or for all, or parts of, a particular programme. The relevant Programme Boards must liaise to ensure that module, programme and student handbooks clearly identify where this regulation is to be applied and the penalty for failure to meet the minimum attendance requirement. In addition, Programme Boards must ensure that students are informed of any regulations, which specify penalties that may result from failure to meet the submission dates for coursework, at the beginning of the session. It is the responsibility of the Module Leader to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for the recording of the receipt of coursework from students.
- 9.9 In cases where attendance at specific classes is essential, generally to satisfy Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements, the module handbook shall specify these classes. The Module Leader must ensure that all students are informed via the module handbook.
- 9.10 Students must not attempt to use the same substantive piece of coursework to meet the assessment requirements of another item of coursework, dissertation or project. In a situation where an Assessment Board believes there is evidence that a student has attempted to use the same substantive piece of work for more than one item of coursework, the matter will be dealt with as Plagiarism and pursued in line with the *Code of Student Conduct*. Both module tutors and students must be aware of this regulation and it is the responsibility of module tutors to ensure that assessment topics do not overlap significantly.

The following statement should be incorporated into any piece of coursework submitted by a student:

“This piece of coursework is my own original work and has not been submitted elsewhere in fulfilment of the requirement of this or any other award.”

10. Coursework – Late Submission and Failure to Submit

10.1 In each of the following eventualities, it is the Module Leader who has the responsibility for determining a new submission date. It is the responsibility of all Module Leaders who grant dispensation to liaise with the Programme Leader in cases of a significant extension (greater than 5 working days). No extensions may be granted that extend beyond the date students receive feedback on their assessment. Late submissions that are beyond this date will be dealt with under the procedures for *Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances*.

10.2 Failure by a student to meet any given submission deadline without good cause will result in a mark of zero for the coursework element concerned.

10.3 Where a student has good cause, supported by documentary evidence where appropriate, for a late submission and intimates this in advance of the submission deadline, a later submission date should be negotiated with the Module Leader, or, if unavailable, the Programme Leader. In the circumstances outlined in this paragraph, no penalty for late submission will be applied. It is expected that this regulation would apply in cases such as the following: serious domestic or personal problems or attendance at the doctor, dentist, hospital, court of law or funeral.

10.4 Where a student has, in circumstances that could not reasonably be foreseen (supported by documentary evidence where appropriate) good cause for late submission which they have not intimated in advance, they must notify the Module Leader, (or, if unavailable, the Programme Leader) as soon as possible. Provided there are valid reasons for the late notification, a later submission date should be negotiated with the Module Leader (or, if unavailable, the Programme Leader).

However it is acknowledged that if the notification is too close to the Assessment Board, a late submission date may not be possible. In the circumstances outlined in this paragraph, no penalty for late submission will be applied. It is expected that this regulation would apply in cases where the circumstances could not reasonably have been foreseen, such as the following: serious domestic or personal problems or attendance at the doctor, dentist, hospital, or funeral.

10.5 Where the coursework assessment requires attendance at a specialised teaching session, either at the University (e.g. a laboratory, seminar, or clinic) or elsewhere (e.g. an industrial or clinical placement, field exercise, or laboratory visit), and, where a student has good cause for non-attendance, in line with 10.3 and 10.4, a revised submission date should be negotiated. It is acknowledged that an alternative visit or laboratory exercise may not be possible, in which case Module Leaders have discretion to provide, for example, data from another source, or similar.

- 10.6 If in the cases of 10.3, 10.4 and 10.5 it has not possible to arrange a late submission date and thereby not enabling a mark to be awarded, the case must be processed in line with the *Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances*, and the student must submit the required form.
- 10.7 Where it has been impossible to make alternative arrangements, and the case for the non-submission has been accepted under 10.6, Assessment Boards have discretion to allow an average mark for a similar exercise(s) to be used in calculating the final mark for that module. Clearly in clinically-based/workshop-based/laboratory-based modules there is a limit to the number of assessments that can be missed and the student still deemed to have reached a satisfactory standard. Where such criteria need to be satisfied, these criteria should be included specified in the programme / module documentation and approved at Programme Approval or Review and/or by the Exceptions Subcommittee.

11. Marking and Moderation

This section should be read in conjunction with the *GCU Moderation Policy*.

- 11.1 All SCQF Level 11 Projects and Dissertations will be marked by two independent examiners, neither of whom is aware of the views of, or the marks being awarded by, the other examiner⁴. In cases where the two markers are unable to produce an agreed mark, it shall be the responsibility of the Dissertation/Project Coordinator to organise further assessment of the dissertation/project by a third appropriately experienced marker in order that a mark can be determined. In such cases, the third marker will determine the final mark to be awarded.
- 11.2 Scripts and coursework relating to assessments will be moderated⁵; this will include borderline assessments, all fails and representative samples⁶. In cases where the marker and the moderator are unable to produce an agreed mark, it shall be the responsibility of the Module Leader to organise further assessment of the script by a third appropriately experienced marker in order that a mark can be determined. In such cases the third marker will determine the final mark to be awarded. All individuals involved with marking or moderating scripts and determining a mark will initial the assessment script. Module Leaders will negotiate with External Examiners to ensure that they are given sufficient time to scrutinise scripts for the assessments for which they have responsibility. The provisions of this paragraph shall apply to all assessment diets.
- 11.3 Where a student has answered more than the required number of questions in any coursework or examination paper and has not indicated which answers are to be excluded from marking, the Module Leader must ensure that only the first questions are marked. For example, if a paper requires five questions to be answered and the student has attempted seven, where the student has not clearly indicated which answers should be excluded, only

⁴ This is often referred to as blind double marking

⁵ In this context **moderation** is taken to mean an assessment of the mark by a second marking who is aware of marks and comments made by the first marker.

⁶ In this context, a representative sample will be 10% across all bands.

the first five questions answered will be marked and used to calculate the overall mark for the paper. In cases where the examination paper or coursework has more than one section, the same procedure as described above will apply to each section.

- 11.4 Module marks can only be considered as provisional prior to the meeting of the Assessment Board.
- 11.5 Where the provision of paragraphs 11.1 and 11.2 are not followed in their entirety, the Assessment Board must be provided with a full explanation for any exception in process and that explanation must be recorded in the Minutes of the Meeting.
- 11.6 Where it is considered that an irregularity in the module assessment has occurred, guidance will be sought from the Department of Academic Quality and Development.

12. Entry of Marks

- 12.1 Marks are entered into the University Management Information System as a percentage. The various data cells required for each module will have been specified in accordance with the module descriptor, including the weightings of assessment components and elements, and the calculation of the aggregate module mark will be performed automatically. The automatic calculation will produce a rounded aggregate mark for the module, based on the following rules: aggregate mark $\geq xx.5$ round up; aggregate mark $< xx.5$ round down.
- 12.2 The module marks calculated by the University Management Information System will be used in the calculation of overall credit-weighted averages for the determination of: distinction and merit; and, compensation. The rules regarding rounding are those that apply in 12.1.
- 12.3 The mark to be recorded at second diet shall be the actual mark achieved by the student. The actual mark obtained at resit should be used in calculations to determine the candidate's eligibility to benefit from Compensation.
- 12.4 Assessment Boards will have access to records which indicate whether the candidates have previously entered a module and with what result(s) (including compensation).

13. Awarding of Credit for Modules

13.1 Module pass criteria

In order to satisfy the examiners in any module, candidates must obtain an aggregate mark of 50% or greater.

- 13.1.1 For all new candidates undertaking SCQF Level 11 modules from September 2018, candidates must obtain a mark of 45% or greater in each element of coursework and examination.

- 13.1.2 For all other candidates, for modules assessed by a combination of a coursework element and an examination component, in addition to achieving an aggregate mark of 50% or greater, candidates must obtain a mark of 45% or greater in each of the coursework and the examination components. If the coursework is formed from two or more elements, unless 13.1.3 applies, the coursework component mark is the aggregated mark of the constituent elements.
- 13.1.3 In cases where certain elements of the coursework component are deemed essential, normally due to Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements, the module descriptor shall specify these elements and the required pass mark. The Module Leader must ensure that all students are informed of any such specific requirements via the module handbook. All such cases must be approved by the Exceptions Subcommittee.
- 13.1.4 In line with 1.3, any approved deviation from the pass mark of 50% must detail the consequential effects, such as the minimum marks to be used in 13.1.2 and 13.1.3. Normally, such minimum marks in components and elements will be 5 percentage points below the approved modified pass mark.
- 13.1.5 In some instances, normally where Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements must be met in professional and clinical modules, the exception from the pass mark of 50% is considerable, for example 80%. Whilst the criteria for passing the module will be detailed in the programme documentation, having been approved as an exception, the module marks used in assessing overall performance, such as in Compensation and Honours Classification are likely to distort the calculations. In such cases Normalisation of the module mark must be used. The process, including the formula to be used in the Normalisation process, must be specified and approved as an exception.

13.2 Compensation

- 13.2.1 Compensation is to make provision for allowing, within specific limits, the overall performance of a student to compensate for failure in up to and including 20 credit points of module(s) at each level of the programme.
- 13.2.2 Compensation is not intended to accommodate situations where mitigating circumstances have been submitted and approved. In these cases Assessment Boards must act in accordance with the procedures set out in the *Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances*.
- 13.2.3 Compensation may only be awarded following delivery and assessment of all of the modules up to the PgD exit award point (i.e. prior to the dissertation/project phase) and where no more than 20 credit points have been failed at that level.

13.2.4 Compensation will not be applied in respect of a postgraduate project or dissertation.

13.2.5 The actual marks attained by the student will be used in all calculations for compensation. The purpose of this regulation is to emphasise the need to use the most recently attained resit mark for the module which is to be considered, together with the actual marks attained for all other modules passed at the same level, to determine eligibility for compensation.

13.2.6 It is acknowledged that some Programme Assessment Regulations may be approved with the regulation that compensation may not be exercised in respect of specified modules, for example where Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies insist on a pass in a named module(s).

13.2.7 Assessment Boards will apply compensation when the following conditions are satisfied:

- i) A student obtains an overall module mark of 45% or greater.
- ii) The student has achieved an overall aggregate mark across all modules of the programme of at least 55%.
- iii) For all new candidates undertaking SCQF level 11 modules from September 2018, the mark for each element of assessment must be equal to or greater than 40%.

For all other candidates, for modules where there is more than one component contributing to the overall mark, each component must be equal to or greater than 40%.

- iv) In modules where certain elements of the coursework component have been approved by the Exceptions Subcommittee as requiring a minimum mark of 45%, the student must have attained a mark of 40% or greater in each of these specified elements of the coursework component.

13.2.8 Assessment Boards have discretion to raise a mark by 1 percent percentage point in order to achieve compensation. This may be applied, either, to the aggregate module mark; or, to one of the Component marks; or, in the case of an approved minimum mark for a coursework element, to a coursework element.

13.2.9 In line with 1.3, any approved exceptions from the pass mark of 50% must accommodate consequential effects in the statement, such as the marks to be used in 13.2.7. Normally such marks will maintain the same percentage points' difference between the pass mark of 50% and the pass mark as specified in the approved exception.

13.3 Nullification of the results of an assessment of a single module at SCQF level 11. Nullification applies to all candidates undertaking the module in question. It is accepted that circumstances may arise, where a module is delivered across several campuses, which impact on the performance of a majority of candidates at a single campus only. In such instances, the Assessment Board may wish to consider nullification of the results of an assessment for candidates at that campus. In all cases, the following regulations will apply.

13.3.1 In exceptional circumstances at SCQF level 11 with the exception of modules specified as essential in response to Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements, where in the view of the Assessment Board, (fully supported by the External Examiner(s)), circumstances prevail whereby the overall performance of a majority of candidates in one module is clearly and obviously out of line with the overall performance of the students throughout the Programme, the Assessment Board may consider nullification. In such instances, the Chair of the Assessment Board will refer any proposal to nullify the results of that module to the DVC (Academic) and the Department of Academic Quality and Development for advice and authorisation. This action will take place in advance of the meeting of the Assessment Board, with a full rationale provided in support of the proposal. In such circumstances, where a request to nullify is authorised, a final pass will be recorded on the student record and the students will be credited with the credit points to be accrued from that module for final award purposes. Such actions must be fully recorded, with a clear rationale for the action included within the minute. The Chair of the Assessment Board and the External Examiners will also be required to sign an assent form which clearly indicates that they fully concur with this action. The minute and the assent form will be drawn to the attention of the next meeting of the Learning and Teaching Subcommittee which will require to satisfy itself as to the circumstances underlying this action, to take such follow up action is deemed appropriate and report the matter to Senate accordingly through the Academic Policy and Practice Committee.

13.3.2 For the purposes of the determination of distinction or merit, the average mark of the remaining modules should be substituted for the mark of the nulled module in all calculations.

13.4 Special Circumstances outwith the Control of the Students

13.4.1 In exceptional cases where it is decided by the Assessment Board that an irregularity in the module assessment has occurred, the Board may either: i) re-assess the module, either in full or in part, without adding to the number of attempts; or, ii), consider nullification of the module assessment in line with 13.3.

13.4.2 Actions taken must be fully recorded, with a clear rationale for the action included within the minute. The Chair of the Assessment Board and the External Examiners will also be required to sign an assent form which clearly indicates that they fully concur with this action. The minute and the assent form will be

drawn to the attention of the next meeting of the Learning and Teaching Subcommittee which will require to satisfy itself as to the circumstances underlying this action, to take such follow up action as is deemed appropriate and report the matter to Senate accordingly through the Academic Policy and Practice Committee.

13.4.3 Where it is considered that an irregularity in the module assessment has occurred, guidance will be sought from the Department of Academic Quality and Development in advance of the meeting of the Assessment Board (see 11.6).

14. Maximum Number of Attempts at a Module

14.1 Subject to the Assessment Board's discretion to act in accordance with Regulation 8.2 (withdrawal from a Programme), a candidate is permitted up to and including two attempts at a module.

15. Failure at the First Diet

15.1 Candidates who fail satisfy the Assessment Board at a first diet, will, subject to regulation 8.2 (withdrawal from a Programme), be required to re-enter the relevant modules at the re-assessment diet offered within the same session.

15.2 The Assessment Board may, however, if there is substantive evidence that the student has failed to engage with the module, require a candidate to undertake a further formal programme of study, which may include repeating the work of the individual module, either with or, exceptionally, without a requirement to attend.

15.3 Where a candidate fails to satisfy the Assessment Board in any assessable element of a module, the Examiners may amend the form of assessment to be re-entered, provided adequate notice is given to the candidate of the amended form of assessment to be set.

15.4 Where a candidate was unable to enter an assessment for good cause, the Assessment Board will act in accordance with the procedures set out in the *Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances*.

15.5 Where a student has failed to satisfactorily complete module requirements and has 30 or more credits outstanding at the PgD exit point, the Assessment Board may exercise its discretion to require the student to complete any or all outstanding credit prior to undertaking the Masters Dissertation (or equivalent module).

16. Accumulated Credit and Repetition of Modules

16.1 A student cannot re-enter a module that has already been passed in order to improve his/her marks for that module. Consequently, a student who has been required to repeat a level will only be required to re-enter those modules for which they have failed to record a

pass mark. The Assessment Board shall have the discretion to determine the components/elements of each module which should be re-assessed.

- 16.2 In certain circumstances, for example where a student has taken a significant amount of time out from their programme and there have been significant changes to the content of a module or programme, an Assessment Board may require a student (or a student may request) to re-take a module and/or its assessment prior to progression to a higher level.
- 16.3 A registered student may attend classes in order to improve their knowledge of a module that has already been passed. Such attendance will not involve any assessment or extra payment over and above that which has already been paid. The student must seek advice from their Personal Tutor or, where this is not possible, by another appropriate member of academic staff who is an officer of the programme concerned. The student must confirm in writing that they have received advice and that attendance at such classes is not detrimental to other modules which they may be taking.

17. Awards

- 17.1 The definitive Programme Document and Programme Handbook, will specify the modules and their assessment components in which a candidate must satisfy the Examiners in order to be recommended for an award. The programme will have been approved/re-approved, including confirmation that it conforms to the University Qualifications Framework.
- 17.2 University awards will only be conferred on students who are exiting the University with an appropriate number of credit points or who have successfully completed their programme of study.
- 17.3 The issuing of University awards shall be subject to such procedures as the Senate may approve from time to time and to the payment of such fees as the University Court may from time to time determine. These are detailed in the *University's Graduation and Awards Regulations*.

18. Merit or Distinction

- 18.1 When the Assessment Board is satisfied that a candidate has shown special performance in assessment, it may recommend that the award be granted 'with merit' or 'with distinction'.
- 18.2 The criteria for the award of 'with Merit' or 'with Distinction' are as follows:
- 18.2.1 Merit: i) overall credit-weighted average of the modules used in the calculation, as specified in 18.2.3, within the range 65% to 69%, and ii) passed all modules undertaken at the level of the award at the first attempt, and iii) passed all modules included in the calculation at the first attempt.

18.2.2 Distinction: i) overall credit-weighted average of the modules used in the calculation, as specified in 18.2.3, equal to 70% or greater, and ii) passed all modules undertaken at the level of the award at first attempt, and iii) passed all modules included in the calculation at the first attempt with a mark of 55% or greater and iv) where the award has a project/dissertation module (or equivalent), the mark for that module is no less than 70%.

18.2.3 Modules to be used in the calculation of merit and distinction are as follows:

Award	Level	Credit points	Calculation
Postgraduate Certificate	SCQF 11	60	A minimum of 40 credits at SCQF 11
Postgraduate Diploma	SCQF 11	120	A minimum of 90 credits at SCQF 11
Masters	SCQF 11	180	A minimum of 150 credits at SCQF 11
CPD awards	various	20	All 20 credit points

19. Oral Assessment

19.1 In particular cases where a student's performance is close to a merit or distinction boundary, oral assessments may be arranged. In such cases it is recommended that an informal meeting of the relevant Module Leaders prepare a list of borderline and other students to be assessed orally by the External Examiners, who must be consulted before the final list is agreed. Oral assessments of students may be beneficial to External Examiners in assisting them to make recommendations as to whether an upgrading of classification is appropriate and therefore must be arranged in sufficient time to allow the External Examiners to provide a considered assessment at the formal meeting of the Assessment Board

20. Additional Arrangements

20.1 In special circumstances or where a candidate is unable to satisfy the relevant Assessment Board in course work, laboratory work, formal exams or other work assessed during a module, the Assessment Board may require a student to present him/herself for oral, practical or other additional assessments at any stage of the programme. In situations where a formal examination has been declared invalid, for whatever reason, an Assessment Board may require a candidate or candidates to present themselves for an alternative assessment. The results of such assessments may be used by Assessment Boards to supplement assessed course work and other formal assessments.

21. Valid Reasons for Poor Performance at any level

21.1 In the case of individual students, if it is established to the satisfaction of the Mitigating Circumstances Board that a student's absence, failure to submit work or poor performance in all or part of the assessment was due to illness/personal difficulties or other cause found valid, the Assessment Board shall act in accordance with the provisions set out in the procedures for the *Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances*.

22. Aegrotat Awards

22.1 In the case of individual students, where there is insufficient evidence to determine the recommendation for an award under the procedures for the *Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances*, if the Assessment Board is satisfied that the student would have qualified for the award for which they were a candidate had it not been for illness/personal difficulties or other cause, an aegrotat award may be recommended, e.g.:

- Aegrotat Postgraduate Certificate
- Aegrotat Postgraduate Diploma
- Aegrotat Masters Degree

22.2 Such an award should be recommended only exceptionally and normally in circumstances where reassessment within an acceptable timescale would not be possible for the candidate concerned.

22.3 Before a recommendation of the Assessment Board is confirmed under 22.1, the student concerned must have signified that he/she is willing to accept the aegrotat award.

23. Students notified by the Finance Office as Debtors

23.1 In cases where a School has received notification that a student owes outstanding debt to the University, the *Credit Control and Debt Management Policy* will apply.

24. School-based Generic Awards – Replacement of Modules

24.1 Students, with the exception of international students currently registered as GCU on a General Student visa (see 24.6 below), who require up to and including 40 credits for the completion of an exit award may transfer from their programme of study to the appropriate School-based Generic Award.

24.2 It will be at the discretion of the Assessment Board to determine the appropriateness of transferral to a School-based Generic Award, on a case by case basis, for any student with up to and including 40 credits outstanding from their programme of study. The Assessment Board shall have the discretion to either:

- i) Transfer the student to an appropriate School-based Generic Award, where the student will undertake up to 40 credits, and on successful completion, become eligible for a Generic Award, or;
- ii) Require the student to exit from the University with such credit and awards as have been achieved on the student's original programme of study. Section 8.1 of the Assessment Regulations will apply and inform the Assessment Board's deliberations when considering this course of action.

In all cases, the supporting rationale for the decision taken by the Assessment Board will be fully documented in the Assessment Board minutes.

- 24.3 Notwithstanding the provisions elsewhere in these assessment regulations, students who transfer to school-based generic awards and undertake replacement modules will be permitted the number of attempts specified in Section 14 of the Regulations for completion of replacement modules. Students who fail to complete a replacement module within the permitted number of attempts will not be permitted to undertake any further modules as a replacement for the module not completed and will be required to exit, as appropriate, with such credit and awards as have been achieved.
- 24.4 The normal regulations governing compensation shall be applied within school-based generic awards.
- 24.5 Students undertaking school-based generic awards shall be subject to the same regulations governing distinction and honours classification as all other students. Replacement modules passed as a first attempt shall not be subject to capping and may count towards distinction and merit.
- 24.6 International students currently registered at GCU on a General Student visa who have failed on their named programme of study, with a maximum of 40 credits outstanding, and who wish to exit with an award of the University, should be appropriately advised of their options. These are:
- i) Returning to their home country to apply for a Short Term Study Visit Visa that will allow them entry to the UK for a short period of time to undertake up to a maximum of 40 credits for the award of an appropriate school-based generic degree;
 - ii) The possibility, if the provision exists, that they may be able to access a module/s in a distance learning mode from their home country.