

*These regulations apply to students at Plymouth University sites of delivery and in all UK and international partnerships, unless exceptions to regulations have been formally approved.*

## **Plymouth University**

### **Regulatory Framework for Undergraduate Awards (Amendments since 2014/15 bold and underlined)**

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 These Regulations apply to the following University of Plymouth undergraduate awards (including the Foundation Degrees, HNC/D, Integrated Masters, Extended Science and Foundation Pathways in Technology programmes):

##### **Certificate**

Certificate of Higher Education CertHE

##### **Diploma**

Diploma of Higher Education DipHE

Diploma in Professional Studies DPS

Higher National Certificate (Centre Devised) HNC

Higher National Diploma (Centre Devised) HND

Foundation Degree in Arts FdA

Foundation Degree in Science FdSc

Bachelor of Arts BA

##### **Bachelor of Business Administration BBA**

Bachelor of Education BEd

Bachelor of Engineering BEng

Bachelor of Laws LLB

Bachelor of Music BMus

Bachelor of Science BSc

Master of Architecture MArch

##### **Master of Chemistry MChem**

Master of Engineering MEng

Master of Geology MGeol

Master of Mathematics MMath

Master of Osteopathic Medicine MOst

Master of Psychology MPsych

##### **Master of Science MSci**

Master of Statistics MStat

MSci Marine Biology MSci

Graduate Certificate GradCert

Graduate Diploma GradDip

- 1.2 While the centre devised HNC/HND programmes are included within these regulations, separate regulations exist for HNC/HND Edexcel off-the-shelf programmes. HNC/Ds are awarded jointly by the University and Edexcel.
- 1.3 Other undergraduate programmes are expected to conform to the principles underlying these regulations. Specific regulations for such programmes will be agreed at the time of programme approval and incorporated in the student programme handbook.
- 1.4 Unless specific mention is made, these regulations make no distinction, for assessment purposes, between students on different modes of attendance.
- 1.5 Variations from these Regulations may be permitted but will be subject to specific approval under the University's quality assurance processes. Students should refer

to the appropriate student programme handbook for full details of the programme structure and assessment regulations.

## 2 Programme/Scheme Structure

- 2.1 Academic study will be organised into modules, specified in terms of credits. Module sizes may vary from 20 to 60 credits. Modules of 10 credits (normally delivered within one term/semester) must be justified within the approval documentation and discussed and agreed at the approval event.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2 The standard study programme for an award consists of a number of Stages, each of which is worth 120 credits (except in the case of a Foundation Degree or an HNC). A Stage is equivalent to one year of study for a full time student.
- 2.3 In the case of all programmes, a student may not study more than 120 credits in any one session without the specific consent of his/her programme leader. No student may study more than 140 credits in one session.
- 2.4 The Level of a module is determined by the standard of work required to achieve the objectives of the module (see information on level descriptors). The Level of a module will normally be the same as the Stage of the study programme for the award in which the module is specified.

The credit weighting of undergraduate awards will be:

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Certificate of Higher Education | 120 credits at Level 4 or above  |
| Diploma of Higher Education     | 240 credits, of which at least 120 are at Level 5 or above   |
| Diploma in Professional Studies | 240 credits of which at least 120 are at Level 5 or above  |
| Higher National Certificate     | A minimum of 120 credits at Level 4 <sup>2</sup>   |
| Higher National Diploma         | 240 credits of which at least 120 are at Level 5   |
| Foundation Degree               | A minimum of 240 credits of which at least 120 are at Level 5  |
| Ordinary Degree                 | 320 credits of which 80 are at Level 6 <sup>3</sup> and a further 120 at Level 5 or above  |
| Honours Degree                  | 360 credits <sup>4</sup> of which at least 120 are at Level 6, and a further 120 at Level 5 or above   |
| Integrated Master's Degree      | 480 credits. At least 120 credits must be at Level 7, 120 credits must be at Level 6, and a further 120 credits at Level 5 or above <sup>5</sup> |

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<sup>1</sup> Any other variations, other than modules included within the PD Framework and co-curricular modules (e.g. Learning Through Volunteering/Student Ambassador Modules, currently 5 credits at Level 4) would require exceptional approval by Academic Regulations Sub-Committee.

<sup>2</sup> An HNC award may only comprise a mixture of Level 4 and 5 credits if it is industry aligned and is not designed for progression to further study, particularly at Level 6.

<sup>3</sup> A student registered for an Ordinary Degree may not take more than 80 credits at Level 6.

<sup>4</sup> Some four year undergraduate programmes may require completion of up to 480 credits.

<sup>5</sup> The MArch programme consists of 120 Level 6 and 120 Level 7.

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Graduate Certificate | A minimum of 60 credits at Level 6 or above <sup>6</sup>  |
| Graduate Diploma     | A minimum of 120 credits at Level 6 or above <sup>6</sup> |

- 2.5 The title(s) of the award(s) available within an undergraduate programme are specified in the appropriate programme definitive document.
- 2.6 Students may exceptionally be permitted to vary their programme of study at any stage (or level) in up to 20 core or elective credits, subject to:
- Approval by the student's programme manager, who would be expected to confirm that in her/his academic judgement the student would, nevertheless, fulfil the programme learning outcomes;
  - Approval by the relevant module leader who would be requested to confirm that in her/his academic judgement the student had sufficient subject pre-requisite knowledge to successfully complete the new module.

Any proposal would need to take into account timetabling and resource implications and would not normally be available to students on professional body accredited programmes.

### 3 Student Registration/Withdrawal

- 3.1 All students must register at the beginning of their programme of study and subsequently as required. The maximum period of registration for programmes of more than one year's duration is three years longer than the planned duration of the programme with an absolute maximum of ten years. For programmes of one year's duration, the maximum registration is three years for full-time students and five years for part-time students.

For PUIC students, the period of registration commences at the point of enrolment on Stage 1 of the integrated programme.

- 3.2 An application for extension to a student's period of registration must be submitted in writing to the Faculty Business Manager (or nominee), with an explanation of the reasons for the extension and a letter from the programme leader confirming that the extension is supported and that the student is expected to complete within the extended period. The Faculty Business Manager (or nominee) is authorised to approve or otherwise a request for extension.
- 3.3 Ordinary Degree students should complete any Honours top-up within the normal period of registration, ie within three years longer than the planned duration of the programme, or within six years of commencing Level 4 for a full-time student.
- 3.4 Students entering the university to complete a top-up year should complete the award within a maximum of three years.
- 3.5 **All new students are expected to attend University induction week.**

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<sup>6</sup> A Graduate Certificate/Diploma may include modules at Level 7. Note also that admission to a Graduate Certificate/Diploma requires an undergraduate degree or equivalent.

- 3.6 New students are required to complete their module choices by the end of the **first** teaching week of **the semester**. Continuing students will **normally** complete module choices before the end of the previous University teaching year. **Changes to module choices should be notified to the Faculty by the end of the first week of each semester.** Enrolment on a new module will be approved **only** if there are no timetable clashes and the new module has capacity.
- 3.7 Students who wish to withdraw from a module must notify the Faculty Office of their intention in writing **before 50% of the teaching on the module has been completed.** A student who does not do so and subsequently does not complete the module will be deemed to have failed the module. Students who withdraw from a module at this stage will not be allowed to commence another module in the same **semester.**
- 3.8 A student has the right to withdraw from a programme of study at any point during the academic year. Where a student does so, s/he will be awarded credit for any modules successfully completed prior to the date of withdrawal, but will not be permitted to complete any module assessment after the date of withdrawal. A student who has withdrawn from a programme and subsequently wishes to re-join the programme will be required to re-apply. A student may agree with the Faculty that rather than withdraw they will suspend their registration for a period with the intention of resuming their studies. In this case the date for resumption must be agreed when the original suspension is agreed. A student who does not return by the agreed date will be deemed to have withdrawn.
- 3.9 A final stage honours degree student who wishes to withdraw from a project/dissertation module must notify the Faculty Office in writing by the end of the first term after the start of the module for year-long modules. A student who does not do so and subsequently does not present themselves for assessment will be deemed to have failed the module.

#### **4 Credit for Prior Learning**

- 4.1 Detailed guidance regarding credit for prior learning is contained within the Regulations on Accreditation of Prior Learning.
- 4.2 In all cases, the learning for which credit is awarded must constitute a coherent programme of study when considered with the University credits to be studied. Accreditation of prior learning is based on the concept of specific credit (that is that the learning outcomes of the prior learning are directly equivalent to those of the modules from which the student will be exempt as a result).
- 4.3 Individual programmes/schemes will determine the nature of the processes adopted for accreditation of prior learning.

#### **5 Assessment**

- 5.1 The purposes of assessment are:
- to objectively measure a student's achievements against the learning outcomes of the module
  - to assist student learning by providing appropriate feedback on performance
  - to provide a reliable and consistent basis for the recommendation of an appropriate award

- 5.2 The assessment for each module will be detailed in the Module Record. This will specify the elements contributing to summative assessment (e.g. whether coursework or examination or a combination, etc<sup>7</sup>). Where assessment is by a combination of elements, the weightings of each element must be stated.
- 5.3 Formal examinations, where part of a module assessment, will be scheduled after the end of the University's standard teaching year<sup>8 9</sup>. Other element assessments will be set during the module.
- 5.4 Students will be assessed according to the assessment specified for each module on which they are registered, irrespective of their programme of study.

## 6 Successful completion of a module

- 6.1 The pass mark for an undergraduate module (Levels 0 and 4-6) is 40%. Students on HNC/D programmes will, in addition, be awarded grades of Pass, Merit or Distinction for all modules.
- 6.2 Where module assessment involves more than one element, a student is also required to achieve a minimum of 30% in each<sup>10</sup>. A module may be validated with the requirement that a student achieve a mark of over 30% in each of the elements<sup>11</sup>.
- 6.3 An Integrated Masters programme will, and a Graduate Diploma may, include modules at Level 7. The pass mark for Level 7 modules is 50% and where module assessment involves more than one element, a student is also required to achieve a minimum of 40% in each element. A Level 7 module may be validated with the requirement that a student achieve a mark of over 40% in each element (this would normally be 50%).
- 6.4 **A student who fails the immersive module in the first semester, and is required to take a referral, is required to refer only those components which s/he failed.** A student who fails any **other module** and is required to take a referral will normally be required to refer only the element(s) of the module which s/he failed. A student who fails and is required to repeat a module will normally be required to repeat all elements<sup>12</sup>.
- 6.5 Modules which have been successfully completed cannot be reassessed.

## 7 Successful Completion of a Level

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<sup>7</sup> A full list, together with definitions, of the various elements is included elsewhere in the Academic Regulations.

<sup>8</sup> Foundation Degrees operated in Partner Colleges running on a semester structure will have formal examinations at the end of each semester.

<sup>9</sup> Modules taught in the first term only will not normally have formal examinations at the end of the year. Where end-year examinations are approved for term 1 modules, staff will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support student revision.

<sup>10</sup> An element is not necessarily one piece of work, but the weighted marks obtained for one type of assessment.

<sup>11</sup> Normally, this will require a pass (40%) in either or both elements of assessment. Exceptions will be validated only where an accrediting professional body requires an alternative minimum achievement.

<sup>12</sup> Except where there is for example a substantial laboratory/fieldwork element which has been completed to a good standard where timetabling problems may otherwise occur. In such cases the Award Assessment Board will specify what is to be retaken

- 7.1 An Award Assessment Board will normally meet at the end of the Summer term and in September. **The Faculties will make local arrangements to review the provisional marks of the immersive module in order to identify those students requiring an in-year referral.**
- 7.2 A student must pass **120** credits to complete the Level **and progress / graduate.**
- 7.3 A full-time student will be expected to complete a Level before being allowed to progress to the next Level (but see 9.2 below).

## **8 Awards**

### 8.1 Higher National Certificate

#### 8.1.1 A Higher National Certificate may be awarded to:

A student who is registered by the University with Edexcel for the award of the HNC and has successfully completed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 4 or above, including all modules designated as essential for the award.

A student who has successfully completed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 4 or above in an HND programme on which s/he is not continuing, provided s/he has completed the modules which are designated as essential for the award of the HNC.

#### 8.1.2 If the student's aggregate mark across all modules is 70% or above, the HNC will be awarded with Distinction.

### 8.2 Higher National Diploma

#### 8.2.1 A Higher National Diploma may be awarded to a student who is registered by the University with Edexcel for the award of the HND and has successfully completed 240 credits, including at least 120 credits at Level 5.

#### 8.2.2 If the student's aggregate mark across all modules is 70% or above, the HND will be awarded with Distinction.<sup>14</sup>

### 8.3 Foundation Degree

#### 8.3.1 A Foundation Degree will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed a minimum of 240 credits, including at least 120 credits at Level 5 or above.

#### 8.3.2 If the student's aggregate mark across all modules is 70% or above, the Foundation Degree will be awarded with Distinction.<sup>13</sup> **If the student's aggregate mark across all modules is between 60% and 69%, the Foundation Degree will be awarded with Merit.**

### 8.4 Certificate of Higher Education

#### 8.4.1 A Certificate of Higher Education may be awarded to:

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<sup>13</sup> ALL modules at Levels 4 and 5 count towards the award of a Distinction.

a student who is registered for the award of a Certificate of Higher Education and has successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4 or above; or

a student who has successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4 or above in an undergraduate programme on which s/he is not continuing, provided the credits successfully completed fall within the programme specification for the award.

- 8.4.2 If the aggregate of the student's best 120 credits falling within the programme specification (subject to any core or co-requisite requirements) is 70% or above, the CertHE will be awarded with Distinction.

## 8.5 Diploma of Higher Education

- 8.5.1 A Diploma of Higher Education<sup>14</sup> may be awarded to:

a student who is registered for the award of a Diploma of Higher Education and has successfully completed 240 credits, including at least 120 credits at Level 5 or above; or

a student who has successfully completed 240 credits, including at least 120 credits at Level 5 or above, in a Degree or Honours Degree programme<sup>15</sup> on which s/he is not continuing

- 8.5.2 If the aggregate of the student's best 120 credits at Level 5 or above falling within the programme specification (subject to any core/pre-requisite requirements) is 70% or above, the DipHE will be awarded with Distinction.

## 8.6 Degree<sup>16</sup>

- 8.6.1 A student registered for a Degree is required successfully to complete 320 credits, including 80 credits at Level 6 and 120 further credits at Level 5 or above.

- 8.6.2 The degree is not classified but a Degree with Commendation will be awarded to a student who achieves an aggregate percentage mark of 60% or above and a Degree with Distinction will be awarded to a student who achieves an aggregate percentage mark of 70% or above.

- 8.6.3 Students who completed Level 4 in its entirety before the 2014-15 academic year, or are repeating any part of Level 4 as a next attempt in 2014-15, should refer to [Appendix B](#) of this document for information on how the classification of the degree is calculated.

- 8.6.4 The award of Commendation or Distinction for students entering Level 4 from 2014/15 (or who are required to repeat Level 4 in its entirety as a first attempt from 2014/15) will be based initially on the aggregate percentage mark. The aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:

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<sup>14</sup> or Diploma in Professional Studies, if that is the qualification approved in the definitive award documentation

<sup>15</sup> but not a Foundation Degree or HND programme

<sup>16</sup> A student who is awarded a degree having followed an ordinary degree route may apply to 'top-up' to an Honours Degree. (See Guidelines on Registering for the Ordinary Degree Route and Application for the Top-Up to Honours)

Levels 4 : 5 : 6 will be weighted 1 : 3 : 6

The Level 4 aggregate mark is calculated using the highest module marks totalling 80 credits. Where modules are arranged in such a way that the 80 credits of 'highest module marks' cannot be identified unequivocally, the **level 4 aggregate mark calculation should take into account as close to 80 credits as possible, depending on the module structure.**

The Level 4 aggregate mark will contribute to the aggregate for the calculation of the classification of the degree only.

## 8.7 Honours Degree

8.7.1 An Honours Degree will be awarded to a student who has passed 360 credits<sup>17</sup>, including at least 120 credits at Level 6, and a further 120 credits at Level 5 or above, and met any subject specific requirements for the award.

8.7.2 Classification will be based initially on the aggregate percentage mark.

8.7.3 Students who completed Level 4 in its entirety before the 2014-15 academic year, or are repeating any part of Level 4 as a next attempt in 2014-15, should refer to [Appendix B](#) of this document for information on how the classification of the degree is calculated.

The aggregate percentage mark for students entering Level 4 from 2014/15 (or who are required to repeat Level 4 in its entirety as a first attempt from 2014/15) will be calculated as follows:

Honours degree: Levels 4 : 5 : 6 will be weighted 1 : 3 : 6.

The Level 4 aggregate mark is calculated using the highest module marks totalling 80 credits. Where modules are arranged in such a way that the 80 credits of 'highest module marks' cannot be identified unequivocally, the **level 4 aggregate mark calculation should take into account as close to 80 credits as possible, depending on the module structure.**

If the student's aggregate percentage mark falls within the boundaries of the classifications defined below, s/he is entitled to that award.

First Class Honours 70% or above

Second Class Honours, Upper Division 60%-69%

Second Class Honours, Lower Division 50%-59%

Third Class Honours 40%-49%

8.7.4 If the aggregate percentage achieved by a candidate is not more than 3.0 percentage points below a classification band, the Board must invoke the following alternative classification methods:

8.7.4.1 Level 6 aggregate: The Award Assessment Board will award an Honours Degree with the higher classification to a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band provided that the

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<sup>17</sup> Or 480 credits in some four year programmes

student's aggregate percentage at Level 6 is in the higher classification band.

8.7.4.2 Module profile: The Award Assessment Board will award an Honours Degree with the higher classification to a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band, provided that more than half of the student's Level 5 and 6 credits are in the higher classification band. Each Level 6 credit is double weighted (compared with a Level 5 credit) for this purpose.<sup>18</sup>

8.7.5 Where a student has been awarded a Plymouth University HND or Foundation degree and progresses to Plymouth University the degree calculation will follow the same procedure as for internal Plymouth University students. This applies to progression from all PU HND / Foundation degrees, whether or not the progression is to an articulated route.

Following progression to Level 5 of a Plymouth University award, the award classification for students entering Level 4 from 2014/15 (or who are required to repeat Level 4 in its entirety from 2014/15) will be calculated using the ratio 1 : 3 : 6. (1 from the HND /Foundation Degree, 3 : 6 from the third and fourth years). The aggregate mark from the HND / Foundation Degree will be calculated using the highest module marks at level 4 and level 5 of the Foundation Degree totalling 80 credits. Where modules are arranged in such a way that the 80 credits of 'highest module marks' cannot be identified unequivocally, the **level 4 aggregate mark calculation should take into account as close to 80 credits as possible, depending on the module structure.**

Following progression to Level 6 of a Plymouth University award, the award classification for students entering Level 4 from 2014/15 (or who are required to repeat Level 4 in its entirety from 2014/15) will be calculated using the ratio 1 : 3 : 6 (1 : 3 from Foundation Degree, 6 from Plymouth final stage) The aggregate mark from level 4 of the Foundation Degree will be calculated using the highest module marks totalling 80 credits.

8.7.6 The Level 4 aggregate mark will contribute to the aggregate for the calculation of the classification of the degree only. It will not contribute to the module profile

8.8 Where a student has gained credits from another approved institution of higher education, in the UK or overseas, or through other APEL routes, the degree calculation will follow the agreement made at the time at which those credits were accepted. This will be either to award actual marks from such credits, or to assign credit without marks. Where marks are permitted on entry, they will be used to calculate the final aggregate percentage in the proportions shown in these regulations. Where marks are not permitted on entry, then the proportion of the degree calculation assigned to the level of study for which marks are absent will be assigned to the next highest level of study.

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<sup>18</sup> Where the module profile is based on Level 6 performance only, a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band will be required to have achieved more than half of the Level 6 credits in the higher classification band in order to be awarded an Honours Degree with the higher classification

## 8.9 Integrated Master's degree

- 8.9.1 An Integrated Master's Degree will be awarded to a student who has passed 480 credits, including at least 120 at Level 7, a further 120 at Level 6 or above, and a further 240 at Level 4, 5 or above.
- 8.9.2 The MArch degree will be awarded to a student who has passed 240 credits, including at least 120 at Level 7 and a further 120 at Level 6.
- 8.9.3 An Integrated Master's Degree may be classified, or may be awarded with Commendation and/or with Distinction. Classification will be based initially on the aggregate percentage mark.
- 8.9.4 Students who completed Level 4 in its entirety before the 2014-15 academic year, or are repeating any part of Level 4 as a next attempt in 2014-15, should refer to the Programme Handbook for information on how the classification of the degree is calculated.

For students entering Level 4 from 2014/15 (or who are required to repeat Level 4 in its entirety as a first attempt from 2014/15), the aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:

Levels 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 will be weighted 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 :

The Level 4 aggregate mark will contribute to the aggregate for the calculation of the classification of the degree only. It will not contribute to the module profile.

- 8.9.5 If a student completes an exchange year, the weighting for Level 5 will be carried forward to Level 7. In this instance, the weighting will be 1:0:3:6.

## 9 Procedure in the Event of Failure

- 9.1 **A student who fails any component(s) of the immersive module in the first semester will be required to complete an in-year referral in the failed component(s) by week 15. Referred work will be capped at element level.**
- 9.2 A student will be deemed to have completed the Level if they have failed in up to 20 credits with mark 30% or more provided that the failed credits are not designated as non-compensatable and they have achieved an aggregate mark of at least 40% in the Level overall. In such cases a student will be awarded a compensated pass in the module(s).<sup>19 20</sup>
- 9.3 A part time student may be awarded a compensated pass only at the point when the student has attempted 120 credits of a Level. There should normally be no compensation for an individual module taken as accredited Professional

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<sup>19</sup> If the original module mark was below 40%, it will stand; if above 40%, e.g. where failure is due to failing to meet minimum required standards in one element, the mark will be reduced to 40%. Compensation for Modules at Level 7 will normally be in line with the Regulatory Framework for Postgraduate Awards, i.e. where module marks are within 5% of the pass mark.

<sup>20</sup> Compensation cannot be applied in the case of any programme where assessments are marked on a pass/fail basis, i.e. no marks are awarded. **Compensation cannot be applied to the in-year referral for the immersive module. Compensation will only be considered at the Award Assessment Board when the full module profile is known.**

Development (PD), but a module taken as accredited PD may be compensated, dependent on the module status, when it contributes to a programme or an award.

- 9.4** If a student **has failed** up to 60 credits **at the time of the Award Assessment Board meeting**, s/he will be allowed to take appropriate referred assessment(s) (as specified by the Award Assessment Board) at the next available opportunity<sup>21 22 23</sup>. The original rule for passing the module will apply for any student, unless the Award Assessment Board has specified a single module assessment in substitution for both elements, in which case the student must achieve 40% in that assessment.
- 9.5** In the case of a student who fails up to 60 credits at the final stage, the Award Assessment Board may at its discretion:
- 9.5.1** allow the student's overall performance to compensate<sup>24</sup> for failure in a maximum of 20 credits and make an award based on the aggregate mark achieved; or
  - 9.5.2** allow the student to resit/resubmit the appropriate assessments(s) (as specified by the Award Assessment Board) in up to 60 credits at the next available opportunity<sup>25 26 27</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The 'next available opportunity' will normally be the following September. A student who fails to submit referred assessment or attend a refer examination will be awarded a mark of zero for that element. Students should be warned that there would not be an appropriate level of supervision available over the summer for a September submission, and that repeating module(s), for which the standard fee would be payable, would be permissible.

<sup>22</sup> The form of the referred assessment does not have to be the same as the form of assessment which was originally failed. It is the responsibility of the Award Assessment Board to specify the form of the reassessment. However, if the form of the reassessment is different (including cases where the nature of the examination or coursework has changed) students should be informed in writing, via the student transcript and accompanying letter.

<sup>23</sup> Students may only be referred in a co-curricular module (e.g. Learning Through Volunteering/ Student Ambassador modules) if their overall level of failure is no more than 60 credits. If a student failed 60 programme credits in addition to a failure in the co-curricular module(s) s/he would be referred in the programme credits only and would be required to retake the co-curricular module(s) during the next academic year.

<sup>24</sup> Compensation may be applied only where failed module aggregate marks are between 30-39% and where the credits are not specified in the programme handbook as non-compensatable. If the original module mark was below 40, it will stand; if above 40, e.g. where failure is due to failing to meet minimum required standards in one element, the mark will be reduced to 40. Compensation for Modules at Level 7 will normally be in line with the Regulatory Framework for Postgraduate Awards, i.e. where module marks are within 5% of the pass mark. A part time student may be awarded a compensated pass only at the point when the student has attempted 120 credits of a level.

<sup>25</sup> The 'next available opportunity' will normally be the following September. A student who fails to resubmit work or attend a resit examination will be awarded a mark of zero for that element. Students who are required to resubmit the dissertation should be given the option of submission for the September Referred Board or the following Summer. Students should be warned that there would not be an appropriate level of supervision available over the summer for a September submission, and that repeating the dissertation module, for which the standard fee would be payable, would be recommended. (This could be extended to other modules requiring access to facilities or on-going supervision – as specified by the Award Assessment Board)

<sup>26</sup> The form of the retake assessment does **not** have to be the same as the form of assessment which was originally failed. It is the responsibility of the Award Assessment Board to specify the form of the reassessment. However, if the form of the reassessment is different (including cases where the nature of the examination or coursework has changed) students should be informed in writing.

- 9.6 The Award Assessment Board should make its decision on whether to compensate or refer at the final stage based on the student's potential to achieve a higher classification on referral.
- 9.7 If a student **has failed** more than 60 credits **at the time of the Award Assessment Board meeting**, the Award Assessment Board will:-
- 9.7.1 require the student to repeat the failed modules with attendance<sup>28</sup>; or
  - 9.7.2 where there are valid extenuating circumstances, allow the student to take referrals in the appropriate assessments at the next available opportunity. To be eligible for such a referral, students should normally have demonstrated sufficient academic progress during the year to suggest that they have the potential to achieve all the credits in which they have been referred; or
  - 9.7.3 require the student to withdraw from the programme<sup>29</sup>; and award any intermediate qualification for which the student has achieved the credit requirements, or
  - 9.7.4 require a student whose extenuating circumstances will prevent the completion of the award during the normal period of registration, or have prevented her/him from making academic progress in the previous session, to interrupt studies or withdraw from the programme<sup>30</sup>; or
  - 9.7.5 require a student who has developed a health or other problem which prevents her/him from meeting the learning outcomes of her/his programme to transfer to an alternative programme or withdraw from the programme and be granted the appropriate exit or aegrotat award.<sup>29</sup>
- 9.8 A final stage student who has been required, following a summer Award Board, to repeat failed modules under Regulation 9.6.2 will be permitted to request referrals over the summer vacation period (with the normal submission deadline) and to then be considered for the award of a Degree as an exit award. Should the students wish to return to the University to "top up" to Honours, s/he would be required to re-apply for admission, normally no less than two years following the award of the Degree. The University's decision on re-admission will be final.

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<sup>27</sup> Students may only be referred in a co-curricular module (e.g. Learning Through Volunteering / Student Ambassador modules) if their overall level of failure is no more than the maximum 60 credits. If a student failed 60 programme credits in addition to a failure in the co-curricular module(s) s/he would be referred in the programme credits only and would be required to retake the co-curricular module(s) during the next academic year.

<sup>28</sup> This is likely to be the most common decision for students who have failed more than 60 credits at the first attempt. A student may elect to take an alternative module to the one taken at the original attempt provided that s/he takes all required core/essential modules. It is within the discretion of an Award Assessment Board to agree, as a general guideline, that any student who had, because of the level of failure, taken a year twice with attendance, should not be permitted a third repeat year. However, since this was a matter for the discretion of the Board, it was important that the Board consider each individual case rather than apply its guidelines automatically.

<sup>29</sup> This ought to be an exceptional decision, only taken when it is clearly in the student's best interests and usually the opportunity to repeat the failed modules has been applied.

<sup>30</sup> This regulation is subject to the fitness to study process being invoked

**9.9** A student will normally be permitted a maximum of three attempts at a module.<sup>31</sup> A failed module may therefore not normally be referred or repeated on more than two occasions. If a student **studies** a different module instead of the failed module the number of attempts at the original module will count towards the maximum number of attempts at the new module.

**9.10** Where a failed module is successfully passed after referral or repeat, any element retaken will be capped at 40%. In the case of repeated modules this would normally apply to all elements. If a student **studies** a different module instead of the failed module, the capping at 40% will still apply. Marks will not be capped where the referral or repeat is as a first attempt.<sup>32</sup>

## **10 Failure after Referral**

**10.1** If a student has passed a minimum of 100 credits after having completed referrals, s/he may be compensated for failure in up to 20 credits with marks of 30% or more, provided that the failed credits are not designated as non-compensatable and s/he has achieved an aggregate mark of at least 40% in the Level overall. In such cases a student will be awarded a compensated pass in the module(s).<sup>33 34</sup>

**10.2** If after referrals, and after consideration of compensation, a student has not achieved the requisite number of credits to complete the Level, the Award Assessment Board will:

**10.2.1** exceptionally allow the student to progress and offer a further referral opportunity during the next session, based on a judgement of the student's overall performance and potential. This decision will normally be applied in the case of failure in up to 20 credits (or one 30 credit module)<sup>35</sup>; or

**10.2.2** require the student to repeat the failed modules with attendance, or

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<sup>31</sup> Two attempts in the case of students on the Extended Science foundation year and Foundation Pathways in Technology.

<sup>32</sup> Where students are transferring to a new programme and/or subject area and taking a large number of new modules (perhaps 60 credits) Award Assessment Boards may allow students to be credited with whatever mark is achieved at the second or final attempt. The reasons for any exception must be discussed with the External Examiner and minuted.

<sup>33</sup> If the original module mark was below 40%, it will stand; if above 40%, e.g. where failure is due to failing to meet minimum required standards in one element, the mark will be reduced to 40%. Compensation at Level 7 will normally be in line with the regulatory framework for postgraduate awards, i.e. where module marks are within 5% of a pass mark.

<sup>34</sup> An Honours Degree student who has failed referrals, or chosen not to resit, but achieved 60/70 credits at Level 6 would be awarded a DipHE (compensation in 10/20 credits in order to qualify for an Ordinary Degree would not be considered). The consideration of compensation for an honours student who has failed a resit module at the Resit Award Assessment Board and is repeating a module during the following academic year would be deferred until the overall final results are known. If the repeat module is failed compensation would not be considered and a DipHE would be awarded.

<sup>35</sup> The Award Assessment Board may determine the form of the reassessment. Where the referral takes the form of coursework, the submission date should normally be set for end-November and, while marks are provisional, feedback should be given to students by the end of the Autumn Term (with academic staff consulting with External Examiners over any borderline marks). This would enable students who had failed at their final attempt to be advised of their options and, in particular, to have the opportunity of withdrawing by the end of the first week of the following term and thereby avoiding liability for the full year's fees. Referred examinations/fieldwork will normally be taken on the next occasion on which the examination/fieldwork is scheduled.

- 10.2.3 require the student to withdraw from the programme<sup>35</sup>; and award any intermediate qualification for which the student has achieved the credit requirements, or
- 10.2.4 require a student whose extenuating circumstances will prevent the completion of the award during the normal period of registration, or have prevented her/him from making academic progress in the previous session, to interrupt studies or withdraw from the programme<sup>36</sup>; or
- 10.2.5 require a student who has developed a health or other problem which prevents her/him from meeting the learning outcomes of her/his programme to transfer to an alternative programme or withdraw from the programme and be granted the appropriate exit or aegrotat award.<sup>35</sup>

## **11 Industrial/professional placement**

- 11.1 A period of industrial/professional placement is an essential part of a programme for a sandwich honours degree award, and may be an optional element for a non-sandwich honours degree award. The precise duration of a placement in respect of any named award will be specified in the definitive programme documentation.
- 11.2 If the specified duration of the uninterrupted placement is at least 12 weeks, students who successfully complete the placement will be awarded a Certificate with one of the following titles:

Certificate of Professional Experience  
 Certificate of International Professional Experience  
 Certificate of Industrial/Professional Experience  
 Certificate of Work Experience

The Certificate may NOT be awarded in respect of placements of under 12 uninterrupted weeks. The Certificate may be awarded to a student who has or has not successfully completed the relevant programme.

- 11.3 A student undertaking a placement as part of a sandwich degree will normally be expected to have successfully completed the taught credits from their previous year's study before undertaking the placement. A student who has failed to successfully complete all taught credits may nonetheless be permitted to continue with a placement, provided that they complete referred assessment or examinations at the same time as all other students. They should be able to return to the University to take any referred examinations in September, and employers should be made aware of this requirement.<sup>37</sup> Placements should not normally commence before students are fully aware of any refer/repeat requirements. This would give students the opportunity to carefully consider whether or not to withdraw from a placement if they are required to repeat modules.
- 11.4 The method of assessment of the student's performance on placement must be specified in the definitive document for the appropriate named award. The placement

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<sup>36</sup> This ought to be an exceptional decision, only taken when it is clearly in the student's best interests and usually the opportunity to repeat the failed modules has been applied.

<sup>37</sup> Exceptionally it has been agreed that students in the Plymouth Business School who are taking an international placement, and who may therefore be unable to refer in September, will have the option of re-sitting at the next available opportunity, i.e. June or September of the next academic year.

may be a prerequisite for entry into the subsequent Level but it is not assigned any formal credits.

- 11.5 Where the placement is an essential part of the programme, students who do not successfully complete the placement may be required by the Award Assessment Board to:-

11.5.1 repeat the placement with another employer, or,

11.5.2 transfer to a non-sandwich honours degree course, if available, or,

11.5.3 withdraw from the programme.

## **12. Study abroad and foundation degree top up**

- 12.1 Where a programme requires students to study for a period in a credit awarding institution overseas, credits will be awarded for successful completion of relevant courses approved by the programme team. The definitive award document will specify the number and level of credits to be awarded, the means by which successful completion is to be determined, any contribution of the credits to the award, and any conversion factors applied to the grades/marks.

- 12.2 If a period of study abroad is optional, the student and programme leader must agree in advance and in writing the extent (if any) to which credits awarded are to contribute to the final award, and any conversion factors to be applied to grades/marks. It is the student's responsibility to obtain any certification from the institution concerned.

- 12.3 For students accepted onto the final Level of a Plymouth University Honours degree programme from a Plymouth University Foundation Degree, marks from level 4 and level 5 credits on the Foundation Degree will count towards the final degree classification, as set out in section 8.7.4.

## **13. Aggregate Percentage Mark for Graduating Students**

- 13.1 Each module is either awarded a mark out of 100<sup>38</sup> or designated pass / fail. The final aggregate mark is calculated as set out in sections 8.6-8.9 above. The marks for each module are multiplied by the appropriate scaling factor and added together. The resulting aggregate mark is converted to a percentage of the maximum mark obtainable – the aggregate percentage mark.<sup>39</sup>

## **14 Award of the Honours Degree**

- 14.1 An Honours Degree will be awarded to a student who has passed 360 credits, including at least 120 credits at Level 6, and a further 240 credits at Levels 4, 5 or above, and met any subject specific requirements for the award.
- 14.2 Classification will be based initially on the aggregate percentage mark. The aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:

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<sup>38</sup> The student record system holds marks to two decimal places and these are the marks used in calculating the aggregate mark.

<sup>39</sup> The aggregate percentage mark is calculated and held on the Student Record System to two decimal places.

Levels 4 : 5 : 6 will be weighted 1 : 3 : 6

The Level 4 aggregate mark is calculated using the highest module marks totalling 80 credits.

If the student's aggregate percentage mark falls within the boundaries of the classifications defined below, s/he is entitled to that award.

First Class Honours 70% or above

Second Class Honours, Upper Division 60%-69%

Second Class Honours, Lower Division 50%-59%

Third Class Honours 40%-49%

The Level 4 aggregate mark will contribute to the aggregate for the calculation of the classification of the degree only. It will not contribute to the student's profile.

## **15 Extenuating circumstances<sup>40</sup>**

- 15.1 If a student has failed to sit/submit all or part of an assessment due to valid extenuating circumstances, the student has a right to sit/submit the assessment as if for the first time<sup>41 42</sup> in a form and by a date to be determined by the Board.
- 15.2 The circumstances may be such that the student is known to be unable to complete work which has been failed or which s/he has failed to sit/submit. If the Board is satisfied that the student would have qualified for an award had the circumstances not existed, the Board may make an Aegrotat award.<sup>43</sup> It should be noted that Aegrotat awards are not permitted on some professional programmes and are not recognised for membership of many external professional institutions. Aegrotat awards are not granted with Commendation, Distinction or classification.
- 15.3 Valid extenuating circumstances enable the Board to exercise discretion in respect of many of the provisions of these Regulations.

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<sup>40</sup> If a student submits an extenuating circumstance based on a diagnosis of non-physical disability made in the second term but from which the evidence shows the student was also suffering in the first term, that extenuating circumstance should be taken into account also in relation to relevant first term assessments.

<sup>41</sup> Where a student misses an assessment as a result of valid extenuating circumstances, it is possible that the student may be offered the opportunity of a 'first submission' prior to the Board. Alternatively the module leader may agree that where the assessment is made up of a number of components, and does not test learning outcomes which are not otherwise tested, it may be disregarded in calculating the element mark. These actions should be reported to the Award Assessment Board.

<sup>42</sup> The use of the phrase 'as if for the first time' should be read as meaning that the student will be offered another attempt without penalty, hence if the assessment affected by the circumstances was a second/third attempt, the student will be offered a sit/submit as if for the second/third time.

<sup>43</sup> Formally the student must confirm in writing his/her acceptance of the award but it is understood that there may be circumstances in which this is not possible (eg in the case of posthumous awards or those made to students whose medical circumstances make it impossible for them to give informed consent). In such cases the written authorisation of the Award Assessment Board Chair, confirming the circumstances in which the award is made, will be sufficient for the granting of the award.

Where an 'aegrotat' award is made the term 'aegrotat' will appear on the award document e.g. Aegrotat Bachelor of Arts.

**The following are governed by separate Regulations: Student appeals; Extenuating circumstances; late coursework; Examination and Assessment Offences; Accreditation of Prior Learning; Subject Assessment Panels/Award Assessment Boards.**

## APPENDIX A

### UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

#### ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR HNC/D PROGRAMMES

Given below are the generic assessment criteria for HNC/D programmes, approved by the Academic Board at its meeting on 25th June 1997, for implementation with effect from the academic year 1997/98.

The following guidelines and range of marks should be used in the assessment of student work. The assessment criteria are for guidance and may either be adopted by individual programme teams or slightly modified to ensure the terminology within the categories is appropriate for particular programmes. Programme co-ordinators should forward a copy of any modified assessment criteria to be used for individual programmes to the University of Plymouth Colleges Faculty (for all programmes at partner colleges) or to the relevant Senior Quality Administrator for programmes within the University.

| Range of Criteria  | Mark Range | Grade |
|--|------------|-------|
| Answer completely (or almost completely) incorrect or inappropriate, irrespective of length or detail (0-9%)   | 0-39%      | FAIL  |
| Although a few aspects are correct, most of the answer is incorrect or inappropriate (10-19%)  |            |       |
| Although some points are correct, and possibly well developed, most of the answer is incorrect/inappropriate; there is insufficient evidence that the student has experienced the material under assessment (20-29%)   |            |       |
| Whilst some points are correctly presented there are serious errors and/or omissions and/or irrelevant material; evidence that the student has experienced the material under assessment (30-39%)  |            |       |
| Satisfactory answer, based mainly on a reasonable spread of correct and factual information; some satisfactory analysis; little real discussion or wide use of illustrative material (synthesis); sufficient understanding shown for development in later studies (40-47%) | 40-54%     | PASS  |

| Range of Criteria  | Mark Range | Grade       |
|--|------------|-------------|
| Mainly good answer; competent with good analysis; no serious errors; some quantification to support main points; some justified recommendations/conclusions (synthesis) (48-54%)                                   |            |             |
| Uniformly good answer; very good analysis; no serious errors; much quantification to support main points; many justified recommendations (synthesis) and/or conclusions (55-62%)                                   | 55-69%     | MERIT       |
| Very good answer; logical presentation with very good quantification (analysis); exemplification and justification of most points made in discussion; good synthesis (63-69%)                                      | 55-69%     | MERIT       |
| Excellent answer; logical presentation with excellent quantification (analysis); exemplification and justification of most points made in discussion; excellent synthesis (70-90%)                                 | 70% Plus   | DISTINCTION |
| Uniformly outstanding and logical presentation with minimal errors; extremely well quantified; exemplified and discussed; with full justification of all points made; outstanding analysis and synthesis (90-100%) |            |             |

## APPENDIX B

### CALCULATION OF DEGREE CLASSIFICATION FOR STUDENTS WHO COMPLETED LEVEL 4 IN ITS ENTIRETY BEFORE THE 2014-15 ACADEMIC YEAR.

Each module is either awarded a mark out of 100<sup>44</sup> or designated pass/fail. The aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:

Levels 4 : 5 : 6 will be weighted 0 : 3 : 7<sup>45</sup>

If the student's aggregate percentage mark falls within the boundaries of the classifications defined below, s/he is entitled to that award.

First Class Honours 70% or above  
Second Class Honours, Upper Division 60%-69%  
Second Class Honours, Lower Division 50%-59%  
Third Class Honours 40%-49%

If the aggregate percentage achieved by a candidate is not more than 3.0 percentage points below a classification band, the Board must invoke the following alternative classification methods:

Level 6 aggregate: The Award Assessment Board will award an Honours Degree with the higher classification to a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band provided that the student's aggregate percentage at Level 6 is in the higher classification band.

Module profile: The Award Assessment Board will award an Honours Degree with the higher classification to a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band, provided that more than half of the student's Level 5 and 6 credits are in the higher classification band. Each Level 6 credit is double weighted (compared with a Level 5 credit) for this purpose.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> The student record system holds marks to two decimal places and these are the marks used in calculating the aggregate mark.

<sup>45</sup> Some programmes have been approved with other weightings, e.g. Levels 4:5:6 weighted 0:2:8.

<sup>46</sup> Where the module profile is based on Level 6 performance only, a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band will be required to have achieved more than half of the Level 6 credits in the higher classification band in order to be awarded an Honours Degree with the higher classification

|   |                         |   |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Version number<br>2015/16 v5 .0   | Status (final)<br>Final | Owned by:<br>Academic Regulations Co-ordinator  |
| Summary of any amendments:<br>10.2.1 extended referral now permitted for any student in up to 20 credits (formerly only permitted for students with valid ECs, who were due to start a placement).                              |                         |   |
| Document objectives:<br>To describe the University's regulations governing the award of undergraduate degrees effective for the academic year 2015/16 (separate regulations govern the award of two year undergraduate degrees) |                         |   |
| Intended Recipients: Students and staff   |                         |   |
| Approving Body and Date Approved  |                         | Originally approved by Academic Board June 1993 |
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| Contact for review:   |                         | Job title:<br>Academic Regulations Co-ordinator |

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|---------------------|----------------|------------|--------------------|---|
| 2013/14<br>v1.0-3.0 | August 2013    | Pat Wilde  |                    | Drafts used as part of annual review and update of Academic Regulations – not published.  |
| 2013/14<br>v4.0     | December 2013  | Pat Wilde  | v1.0-3.0 above     |   |
| 2014/15<br>v1.0     | September 2014 | Kate Ellis | 2013/14 v4.0 above |   |
| 2014/15<br>v2.0     | September 2014 | Kate Ellis | 2014/15 v1.0 above | Adds back in classification calculation for continuing students (omitted in error from 2014-15 v1)  |
| 2014/15<br>v3.0     | February 2015  | Kate Ellis | 2014/15 v2.0 above | Classification calculation for continuing students moved to an appendix for clarity<br>Reinstatement of procedure in the event of failure at the final stage (9.4 and 9.5).<br>Regulation for referral in more than 60 credits revised (9.6.2). |
| 2014/15<br>v4.0     | June 2015      | Kate Ellis | 2014/15 v3.0 above | Error in 9.4.2 corrected.   |
| 2015/16<br>v1.0     | September 2015 | Kate Ellis | 2014/15 v4.0 above | Updated for roll-out of CEP Award of Foundation Degree with Merit   |
| 2015/16<br>v2.0     | December 2015  | Kate Ellis | 2015/16 v1.0 above | Error in 2.3 corrected.   |
| 2015/16<br>v3.0     | January 2016   | Kate Ellis | 2015/16 v2.0 above | 7.2 clarified following student feedback  |
| 2015/16<br>v4.0     | February 2016  | Kate Ellis | 2015/16 v3.0 above | 1.1 reviewed for consistency with Portfolio of Awards   |
| 2015/16<br>v5.0     | April 2016     | Kate Ellis | 2015/16 v4.0 above | 10.2.1. Extended referral now permitted for any student in up to 20 credits.  |