

## **GSM/University of Plymouth**

### **Regulatory Framework for Undergraduate Awards (Changes since 2015/16 bold and underlined)**

#### **1. Introduction**

These Regulations apply to the following Plymouth University (PU) undergraduate awards delivered at GSM London (GSM).

Certificate of Higher Education CertHE

Diploma of Higher Education DipHE

Bachelor of Arts BA

Bachelor of Science BSc \*

\*excluding BSc (Hons) Law with Management which is covered under separate regulations with LLB awards

#### **2. Programme/scheme structure**

##### **2.1 Module:**

A module, as defined by GSM/PU is a separately assessed unit of learning normally studied and assessed within a semester, consisting of a teaching period, a revision period and an assessment period. Candidates taking a module at the same time will normally be assessed by the same method(s). Candidates shall undertake modules for each level in accordance with the programme structure

##### **2.2. Credit:**

A credit value is assigned to each module indicating the total learning time, including assessment, which a candidate might expect to spend in achieving the learning outcomes associated with the module. The credit value for individual modules is detailed in the Module Record.

2.3. Academic study will be organised into modules, specified in terms of credits. Module sizes may vary from 15 to 30 credits. Modules of 10 credits (normally delivered within one semester) must be justified within the approval documentation and discussed and agreed at the approval event.

2.4. Individual modules will each have a 'shelf life' beyond which the module ceases to be valid for credit transfer or towards an award.

2.5. The standard study programme for an award consists of a number of Levels, each of which is worth 120 credits. A Level is equivalent to one academic year of study for a full time student.

2.6. The Level of a module is determined by the standard of work required to achieve the objectives of the module.

2.7. 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



#### **4. Credit for Prior Learning (see also Regulations on APCL/APEL)**

- 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
  - objectively to 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 (MR) (the student programme handbook for the award(s) will identify where students may access the Module Record). This will specify the elements contributing to summative assessment<sup>4</sup> and will state the weightings of each element within the overall module mark.
- 5.3 Tests, practical assessments and coursework assessment will be set during the module. Formal examinations, where part of a module assessment, will be scheduled at the end of each semester<sup>5 6</sup>.
- 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 (HE Levels 0 and 4-6) is 40%
- 6.2 Where module assessment involves more than one element of assessment, a student is also required to achieve a minimum of 30% in each element<sup>7</sup>. A module may be validated with the requirement that a student achieve a mark of over 30% in any or all of the elements<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> A full list, together with definitions, of the various elements of assessment is included elsewhere in the University's Regulations.

<sup>5</sup> GSM London as an affiliate College runs on a semester structure which has formal examinations at the end of each semester.

<sup>6</sup> Staff will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support student revision for examinations.

<sup>7</sup> An element is not necessarily one piece of work but the weighted marks obtained for one type of assessment.

<sup>8</sup> Normally, this will require a pass (40%) in the specified element(s) of assessment. Exceptions will be validated only where an accrediting professional body requires an alternative maximum achievement.

6.3 A student who fails a module and is required to re-sit will normally be required to re-sit 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>9</sup>.

## **7. Successful completion of Levels 4 and 5**

7.1 An Award Assessment Board will meet at the end of each semester.

7.2 A student must pass 120 credits at the appropriate Level in order to complete that Level. Students will normally take 60 credits in each semester, but can take up to a maximum of 80 credits per semester.

7.3 A student who has failed up to 40 credits of a Level will normally be permitted to progress to the next Level<sup>10</sup>. Thereafter, the student will not be considered for progression to the subsequent Level until the failed modules are successfully completed.

7.4 The Award Assessment Board reserves the right to prevent progression to a more advanced Level prior to completion of the former Level.

7.5 Modules which have been successfully completed cannot be reassessed.

## **8. Award of the Certificate of Higher Education**

8.1 A Certificate of Higher Education may be awarded to 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.

8.2 If the aggregate of the student's best 120 credits falling within the programme specification is 70% or above, the CertHE will be awarded with Distinction.

## **9. Award of the Diploma of Higher Education**

9.1 A Diploma of Higher Education may be awarded to: 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 on which s/he is not continuing provided that the credits passed fall within the programme specification

9.2 If the aggregate of the best 120 credits at Level 5 or above falling within the programme specification is 70% or above, the DipHE will be awarded with Distinction

## **10. Procedure in the event of failure (Levels 4 and 5)**

10.1 A student will be deemed to have completed the Level if they have failed in up to 20 credits with marks of between 30-39% provided that the failed credits are not

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<sup>9</sup> Except where there is for example a substantial laboratory/fieldwork component 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.

<sup>10</sup> Students with one referral, or one referral in each semester of the year will normally be allowed to undertake their referrals alongside their advanced level studies. Students with two referrals which would fall in the same semester are normally required to take an additional semester to complete the level and referred credits, as follows: semester A – 60 level credits + semester B – 40 referred credits + semester C – 60 level credits.

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>11</sup>.

- 10.2 If a student fails up to 40 credits and is permitted to progress to the next Level, s/he will be allowed to take appropriate referred assessment(s) (as specified by the Award Assessment Board) at the next available opportunity<sup>12 13</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 more than one element, in which case the student must achieve 40% in that assessment.
- 10.3 If a student fails more than 40 credits, the Award Assessment Board may, at its discretion:
- 10.3.1 allow the student to resit/resubmit the appropriate assessments at the next available opportunity; or
  - 10.3.2 require the student to withdraw from the programme<sup>14</sup> and award any intermediate qualification for which the student has achieved the credit requirements; or
  - 10.3.3 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>15</sup>; or
  - 10.3.4 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>16</sup>.
- 10.4 A student will normally be permitted a maximum of three attempts at a module. A failed module may therefore not normally be referred or repeated on more than two occasions. If a student chooses to study a different module instead of the failed

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<sup>11</sup> If the original 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.

<sup>12</sup> The 'next available opportunity' will normally be the semester following the Award Assessment Board for students with one referral, or one referral in each semester of the year. Students with two referrals which would fall in the same semester are normally required to take an additional semester to complete the level and referred credits, as follows: semester A – 60 level credits + semester B – 40 referred credits + semester C – 60 level credits. A student who fails to resubmit work or attend a re-sit examination will be awarded a mark of zero for that element.

<sup>13</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 reassessment is different (including cases where the nature of the examination or coursework has changed) students should be informed in writing.

<sup>14</sup> This ought to be an 'exceptional' decision, only taken when it is clearly in the student's best interests and usually after 10.4.1 has been applied. In such a case the Board should consider whether it is appropriate to recommend that the student transfer to another programme. Where a student is not transferring, s/he will be given a Transcript which will specify the modules passed and the credits obtained to date.

<sup>15</sup> This regulation is subject to the Fitness to Study process being invoked.

<sup>16</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 carefully argued and minuted.

module the number of attempts at the original module will count towards the maximum number of attempts at the new module.

- 10.5. Where a failed module is successfully passed after referral or repeat, the mark for the retaken element(s) will be capped at 40% and the capped mark(s) will be used when calculating the overall module mark. If a student chooses to study a different module instead of the failed module, a mark of 40% will be carried forward for aggregation purposes if the new module is passed<sup>16</sup>.

## **11. Failure after referral**

- 11.1 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<sup>17</sup> with marks of between 30-39% provided that 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>18</sup>.
- 11.2. 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 may, at its discretion:
- 11.2.1 require the student to repeat the failed modules with attendance; or
- 11.2.2 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 may only be applied where the student has submitted valid extenuating circumstances and will normally be applied in the case of failure in up to 20 credits (or one 30 credit module)<sup>19</sup>; or
- 11.2.3 require the student to withdraw from the programme<sup>20</sup>.
- 11.2.4 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>21</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Provided those credits are not specified in the programme handbook as non-compensatable.

<sup>18</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.

<sup>19</sup> The Award Assessment Board may determine the form of reassessment. Where the referral takes the form of coursework the submission date should be within the semester the module is scheduled to run, alternatively, the Award Assessment Board may require resubmission of the referred piece of coursework during the subsequent semester. Referred examinations should be taken on the next occasion on which the examination is scheduled. Decisions made under this provision should be discussed with the external examiner and carefully minuted. An Award Assessment Board should consider carefully the consequences of permitting a student to trail re-sits into the Level 6 Honours route.

<sup>20</sup> The Award Assessment Board should consider whether it is appropriate to recommend that the student transfer to another programme or from the Honours Degree to the Degree route. Where a student is not transferring, s/he will be given a Transcript which will specify the modules passed and the credits obtained to date. If a student required to withdraw from a programme has met the learning outcomes for an intermediate award, that award should formally be conferred.

<sup>21</sup> This regulation is subject to the Fitness to Study process being invoked.

11.2.5 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>22</sup>.

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

### **12.1 Aggregate percentage mark.**

Each module is awarded a mark out of 100<sup>22</sup>.

The final aggregate mark is calculated by applying a scale factor of 0.3 to the marks for Level 5, and a scale factor of 0.7 to the marks for Level 6. 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>23</sup>.

## **13. Award of the Degree<sup>24</sup>**

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

13.2 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.

## **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 120 credits at Level 5 or above, and met any subject specific requirements for the award.

14.2 Classification will be based initially on the aggregate percentage mark. 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%

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

14.3.1 Level 6 aggregate: The Award Assessment Board will award an

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<sup>22</sup> The module marks shown on the student transcript will be the actual mark awarded and used to calculate the aggregate mark.

<sup>23</sup> The aggregate percentage mark is calculated and held on the Student Record System to two decimal places.

<sup>24</sup> A student who is awarded a degree having followed the 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).

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.

14.3.2 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>25</sup>.

14.4 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.

## **15. Procedure in the event of failure at the final level<sup>26</sup>**

15.1. In the case of a student who fails to meet the requirements for the award for which s/he is registered at the final level, the Award Assessment Board may at its discretion:

15.1.1 allow the student's overall performance to compensate<sup>27</sup> for failure in a maximum of 20 credits and make an award based on the aggregate mark achieved; or

15.1.2 allow the student to take appropriate referred assessments at the next available opportunity (The Board has the discretion to require a student to repeat a module with attendance if it is deemed to be in the student's best interests. This action must be formally recorded by the Board.) 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 more than one element, in which case the student must achieve 40% in that assessment<sup>28</sup>; or

15.1.3 interrupt studies, transfer to an alternative programme or withdraw from

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<sup>25</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 boundary for a Commendation/Distinction will be required to have achieved more than half of the Level 6 credits in the mark bands of 60%/+70%+ as appropriate in order to be awarded a Degree with Commendation/Distinction.

<sup>26</sup> This will mean Level 6 for a standard Honours Degree programme.

<sup>27</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. 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>28</sup> Where a failed module is successfully retaken a mark of 40% will be carried forward for classification purposes.

the programme and be granted the appropriate exit award if<sup>29 30</sup>

- (a) 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; or
- (b) the student 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.

15.2. A student will normally be permitted a maximum of three attempts at a final level module

## **16. Failure after referral**

16.1. A student may be compensated for failure in up to 20 credits<sup>31</sup> with marks of between 30-39% provided that 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>32</sup>

16.2 If after referral, and after consideration of compensation, a student has not achieved the requisite number of credits to complete the Level, the Award Assessment Board may, at its discretion:

16.2.1 where the student is registered for an Honours degree but has met the learning outcomes and credit requirements for a Degree, award the Degree<sup>33</sup>.

16.2.2 require the student to repeat the failed modules with attendance<sup>34</sup>; or

16.2.3 exceptionally offer a further referral opportunity during the next session, based on a judgement of the student's overall performance and potential. This decision may only be applied where the student

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<sup>29</sup> This regulation is subject to the Fitness to Study process being invoked

<sup>30</sup> If the student has successfully completed 240 credits, including at least 120 at Level 5 or above (and including any specified core modules) s/he will be eligible for the award of the Diploma of Higher Education, which will be awarded with Distinction if the student's aggregate mark is 70% or above.

<sup>31</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. 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>32</sup> An Honours Degree student who has failed referrals, or chose not to resit, but achieved 60/70 credits at Level 6 would be awarded a DipHE (compensation on 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 referred module at the subsequent 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>33</sup> Students who are awarded a Degree having followed a full Honours programme will not be eligible to "top-up" to an Honours Degrees, unless there were exceptional circumstances for failure on the Honours route.

<sup>34</sup> Students will be notified by their Programme Leader if this regulation is not applicable on an accredited programme.

has submitted valid extenuating circumstances for the first or referred attempts, or both, and will normally be applied in the case of failure in up to 20 credits (or one 30 credit module)<sup>35</sup> or

16.2.4 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 and be granted the appropriate exit award;<sup>36 36</sup>

16.2.5 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 withdraw from the programme and be granted the appropriate exit or Aegrotat award<sup>37 37</sup>

16.3 Where a failed module is successfully retaken or repeated, the mark for the retaken/repeated element will be capped at 40% and the capped mark will be used when calculating the overall module mark. If a student chooses to study a different module instead of the failed module, a mark of 40% will be carried forward for aggregation purposes if the new module is passed.

## 17. Extenuating circumstances<sup>38</sup>

17.1 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>38 39</sup> in a form and by a date to be determined by the Board.

17.2 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>40</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

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<sup>35</sup> This regulation is subject to the Fitness to Study process being invoked.

<sup>36</sup> If the student has successfully completed 240 credits, including at least 120 at Level 5 or above (and including any specified core modules) s/he will be eligible for the award of the Diploma of Higher Education, which will be awarded with Distinction if the student's aggregate mark is 70% or above.

<sup>37</sup> If a student submits an extenuating circumstance based on a diagnosis of non-physical disability made in the second semester but from which the evidence shows the student was also suffering in the first semester, that extenuating circumstance should be taken into account also in relation to relevant first semester assessments.

<sup>38</sup> Where a student misses a piece of coursework 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 coursework element is made up of a number of coursework assignments, and does not test learning outcomes which are not otherwise tested, it may be disregarded in calculating the coursework mark. These actions should be reported to the Award Assessment Board.

<sup>39</sup> The use of the phrase 'as if for the first time' in Section 17 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>40</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 (e.g. 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.

awards are not granted with Commendation, Distinction or classification.

- 17.3 Valid extenuating circumstances enable the Board to exercise discretion in respect of many of the provisions of these Regulations.

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

Approved by the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee  
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