

ACADEMIC AWARD REGULATIONS Postgraduate Regulations

Name of regulation :	Postgraduate Regulations
Purpose of regulation :	To describe the framework under which Postgraduate Awards operate
Approval for this regulation given by :	Academic Board
Responsibility for its update :	Dean of Students and Academic Registrar
Regulation applies to :	To all students registered on Staffordshire University Postgraduate Awards.
Date of Approval :	October 2011
Proposed Date of Review :	May 2012

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1.1 The Postgraduate Modular Framework – how does it work?

The Postgraduate Modular Framework is the system through which you will work in order to meet the requirements for the award for which you have registered. The majority of postgraduate awards at Staffordshire University comply with its structures and principles. The Framework is modular so, in order to complete your chosen award, you must successfully complete particular modules at particular Levels which form the structure of your award.

Awards within the University's Postgraduate Modular Framework comply with 'The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland' (FHEQ)¹, published in January 2008. The awards also reflect 'Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit Guidelines for HE Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland' (EWNI credit levels)² published in 2008. These two documents specify the expected levels and volume of study required of certain types of award and the terminology used in the documents is reflected in these Regulations.

Each award of the University is defined by a set of Learning Outcomes that indicate the knowledge and skills the holder of the award will be able to demonstrate. Each module also has its own set of learning outcomes which are tested by the module's assessment. The awards are designed in such a way that these two sets of outcomes are linked to ensure that a student who successfully meets the outcomes of the modules in their award also fulfils the award's outcomes. Details of how the modules feed into the outcomes for your award will be provided in the documentation you receive about your award.

1.1.1 Levels, Modules and Credits – what are they?

The relationship of module, award and credit levels is shown in the following table:

Module Level	FHEQ Qualification Levels
7	Level 7
6	Level 6

1.1.2 Modules and Credits – how many credits are there for each module?

¹ The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, QAA, January 2008 (website <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>)

² Credit and HE Qualifications: Credit Guidelines for HE Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, EWNI Credit Bodies, November 2008

Every module is allocated to a credit Level and is worth a specified number of credits at that level, normally associated with the total learning time required for successful completion of that module. Every module is identified by a unique code the suffix of which indicates its credit Level. For example a Level 7 module is shown by its -7 suffix. Each module has a coherent set of formally identified learning outcomes. In order to earn credit for the module, you must normally satisfy the assessment criteria for all of the designated learning outcomes for the module.



The credit rating of all postgraduate modules is normally either 15 or a multiple of 15. Credits are also sometimes referred to as CATS points (you should read the glossary item on CATS for more details).

The delivery pattern of multiple modules over the academic year will vary according to the module. Some are delivered during one teaching block, others are year-long. You must make sure that you know the delivery pattern of all multiple modules for which you enrol. You should read the glossary items on modules, credit and CATS for more details.

1.1.3 Awards of the Framework – what award will I be taking?

You will have been admitted to the University on a named award. This will include both the subject area and the title of the qualification you are aiming to achieve. In order to complete your award you must complete modules whose credits total the requirements listed below:

Title of the Qualification	FHEQ Qualification Level	Credits Required at Levels
Postgraduate Certificate	7	60 credits overall, normally minimum of 45 at Level 7 and a maximum of 15 at Level 6
Postgraduate Diploma	7	120 credits overall, normally minimum of 90 at Level 7 and a maximum of 30 at Level 6
Masters	7	180 credits overall, normally minimum of 150 at Level 7 and a maximum of 30 at Level 6

All routes of study leading to a Masters award include the specification of a subset of outcomes to define the achievement of a Postgraduate Certificate and a Postgraduate Diploma.

Integrated Masters Award (eg MEng)

These awards involve study at undergraduate and postgraduate (masters) levels. They comprise 480 credits in total, of which at least 120 must be at masters level. The award of a PgC and PgD is not permitted within these awards. The undergraduate elements of the award fall within the remit of the Undergraduate Modular Framework regulations which can be accessed at http://www.staffs.ac.uk/images/ugrad_mod_fram_tcm68-12695.pdf. The final, masters, stage is governed by these Postgraduate regulations.

1.1.4 Registration – how long do I have to complete an award/level?

You have a maximum length of time from when you first register for your award to complete that award and there is also a maximum length of time in which to complete each intermediate stage of the award, where appropriate. These times are given in the following table:

Award on which you are enrolled	Maximum overall registration period	Maximum registration period for any one award stage
Postgraduate Certificate	3years	N/A
Postgraduate Diploma	5years	2 years
Masters	6 years	3 years
Integrated Masters	8 years	4 years

These time scales apply equally to full-time and part-time students. If you find that you need to take longer than these time limits allow, you must apply to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar for permission. Please note that some professional bodies require completion of awards they accredit in a shorter time than those given above or there may be award specific regulations which override this. Your award documentation will indicate where this is the case.

You will only be awarded the award for which you have registered. For example, if you have registered on an Masters Degree programme you should, in the course of your studies, find that you have met the requirements for a Postgraduate Certificate (PgC) and then for a Postgraduate Diploma (PgD). At these points the Examination Board will confirm your eligibility to receive these awards, but it will not automatically award you either a PgC or a PgD at that point.

However, if you subsequently leave your studies before completing your degree, the highest award for which you are eligible will automatically be made to you and your certificate sent to you.

1.2 Your Award

1.2.1 Routes of Study

A Route is a defined pathway of modular study leading to a pre-defined award title. Every designated route comprises a set of modules determined in advance by the Award Team as supporting the learning outcomes of the award, and ratified by the University's Academic Board. You will normally receive an award structure for your award upon enrolment and this will tell you which modules you will need to study. In order to complete the award for which you have registered you must complete the modules specified. The set of modules specific to each award is called an Award Structure.

1.2.2 Module Enrolment – how do I know which modules to enrol on?

The Award structure for your award will normally specify some modules as '**Core**'. These are **compulsory** modules and must be taken in order to complete your chosen award. You may also find that some modules are listed as **Options**. Option modules are those which you select from within a prescribed set for a particular named award. If you are required to study some option modules, you must choose modules attracting the specified number of credits. For any route a minimum of two thirds of the credits will have been specified as part of the award structure (ie as Core and Option modules). Any remaining credits required to achieve the total for the award must be obtained from modules validated for postgraduate study.

1.2.3 Student Workload – how much work am I expected to do?

Each module attracts a number of credits based on the time required to successfully complete the module. For every 15 credits you are normally expected to put in 150 hours of work (including tutor-led activities, independent study and assessment).

Subject to the overall registration periods defined in 1.1.4 above, you may choose your own rate of progression through your award, taking modules as and when they are offered for study. It should be noted, however, that most routes are planned to facilitate study within a specific timescale and modules are offered within that context.

1.2.4 Changing modules - can I change my modules?

Exceptionally you may be allowed to change your choice of option modules. This will only be allowed in cases where there is a sound academic justification for the change. Core modules may not be changed. Any change you make to your choice of option modules must be made **within two weeks** of the start of

the module. If you change modules subsequent to registration you must ensure that both our and your records are correct. If you are recorded as studying for a module you will be eligible for assessment in that module. If we do not know that you have withdrawn from a module you could be recorded as having failed it. Alternatively, if we do not know that you are studying a new module, any assessment undertaken may not be entered onto your records.

1.2.5 Withdrawal from a module

If you withdraw or are withdrawn from a module because of non-attendance or other reason, you will be considered to have failed that module and any subsequent re-enrolment on that module or replacement of that module will be considered as a second attempt for the which the maximum Grade Point will be 7 (4).

If you are already attempting that module for the second time at the point you withdraw or are withdrawn from the module, you will be deemed to have failed the module with no entitlement for further enrolment on that module.

You may not withdraw from a module later than 2 weeks after the start of the module, if you are a continuing student, or 3 weeks after the start of the module, if you are a new student, unless you are changing your mode of study or intermitting from your award.

1.3 Attendance – when do I have to attend?

Your attendance is required at all teaching sessions for the modules for which you have enrolled. Sessions include all tutor-led activities such as lectures, seminars, tutorials and presentations. “Sessions” should not be interpreted as “weeks”. For small group sessions (sessions which involve a sub-set of the whole module cohort) you must attend the sessions to which you have been assigned.

If you are studying modules by distance learning which do not require your physical attendance at the University, ‘attendance’ will be interpreted as participation in any scheduled activities for students on those modules.

1.3.1 Absence – what happens if I miss classes?

If you are absent from a module(s) or programme of study on four consecutive occasions in a teaching block, including lectures, tutorials, seminars, laboratory based classes and scheduled distance learning activities **for reason other than personal illness** without the written approval of the appropriate tutor or Dean of the Faculty/School in which your award is based you may be deemed to have withdrawn from the module(s) or programme of studies and your registration on that module(s) or programme of studies cancelled. Some awards may have their own award specific regulations on attendance which will be published in your Student Handbook. It is your responsibility to make yourself aware of such regulations. You may be excluded from further teaching, denied access to examinations and refused the opportunity to submit assessment for the module or award. You will therefore need to seek permission to start again on the same

module (or a replacement where applicable) or award the following year. This may affect your eligibility to progress to the next Stage of your award, it may lead to the withdrawal by a funding body of your fees and/or grant, and any other financial support that you might be receiving.

If you are unable to attend or participate for up to five working days **through illness** you must complete a **self-certification form** and hand/send it in to your Faculty/School Office. If you are unable to attend or participate for longer than five working days through illness then you must obtain a medical note from your doctor and hand/send that in to your Faculty/School Office. If your absence/illness affects any aspect of your assessment you may be eligible to submit a claim for extenuating circumstances. For further details of this you should read the **Procedures for Making a Claim for Extenuating Circumstances**.

1.4 Assessment – how will I be assessed?

1.4.1 Module Assessment

You will be assessed in every module for which you enrol. You may be required to undertake more than one element of assessment for a module, and you will be given information on what is expected of you at the start of the module. The assessment will be linked to the teaching and learning methods of the module and will be designed to test your achievement of the module's learning outcomes. A range of assessment methods may be used including formal examinations, class tests, essays, projects and case studies. All assessment must be treated with equal gravity and you must attempt all elements.

1.4.2 Breaches of Assessment Regulations - Academic Misconduct

Cheating and/or plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated at Staffordshire University and will be dealt with very seriously. Cheating is defined as any attempt to complete an examination or assessment by unfair means. Plagiarism is defined as submitting the work of others as your own for the purposes of satisfying assessment requirements. Plagiarism also includes allowing your work to be copied by another student.

The University's "**Procedure for Dealing with Breaches of Assessment Regulations: Academic Misconduct**" will give you more detail about what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and about what happens if you are suspected of cheating or plagiarism. This Procedure is included as Appendix III of the Regulations for the Academic Awards of Staffordshire University. It is your responsibility to make sure you read, understand and comply with it.

Please see link to procedures below:

1.4.3 Submission and Late Submission of Coursework – what happens if I submit my work late?

You must submit all pieces of assessment required for each module on or before the submission date for each piece of assessment. Failure to do so is likely to result in failure of the module overall. The submission date will be specified for each piece of assessment for each module. It is your responsibility to make sure you know when your submission dates are and to comply with them. Failure to meet this deadline will be treated as a non-submission and a Grade Point N will be recorded for that component and you will only be allowed a referral(s) in that element(s) of the module at the discretion of the appropriate Board.

The **only exceptions** to these rules apply where a valid **claim for extenuating circumstances** can be made. For further details you should read the **Procedures for Making a Claim for Extenuating Circumstances**.

1.4.4 Module Results/Assessment Referencing Criteria – what do my marks mean?

You will be given a result for your performance in each module. Your result will be determined by considering your performance in relation to the relevant assessment criteria. The assessment criteria will be closely linked to the learning outcomes of the module and will be included within the handbook for each module.

Where there are two or more elements of assessment within a module, the overall result for the module will be determined according to the weighting of each assessment. However, you may be required to achieve a specified minimum mark in each element of assessment in order to achieve an overall pass in the module. Information on any such requirement will be contained in your award or module handbook. If you fail to achieve the specified minimum in an element of assessment you will be required to undertake further assessment (see Section 1.4.5.1).

The University uses a **Grade Point scale** to record your overall module results.

Overall Grade Point for module	Associated Classification for Postgraduate (level 7) modules
15 14 13	Equivalent to Pass with Distinction (defined in numerical terms as 70% and above)
12 11 10	Equivalent to Pass with Merit (defined in numerical terms as 60-69%)
9 8 7	Equivalent to Pass (defined in numerical terms as 50-59%)
6 5 4	Compensatable Fail (where Award Specific Regulations allow for compensation – see Section 1.4.5.2)

3 2 1 0	Fail grade for module which can not be compensated (see section 1.4.5.2)
N	Fail grade for module due to non-Submission which can not be compensated (see section 1.4.5.2). No further attempt at module allowed

When, in accordance with Regulation 1.1.3 above, a validated award structure incorporates up to the maximum of 30 credits at Level 6, such modules shall be assessed and recorded in terms of the Undergraduate Grade Point regulations and their associated pass grade of 40%.

Overall Grade Points for modules	Associated honours classification (undergraduate)
13 – 15	First class
10 – 12	Second class (upper division)
7 – 9	Second class (lower division)
4 – 6	Third class
2 – 3	Fail grade which may be compensated (See Section 1.4.5.2)
0 – 1	Fail grade which can not be compensated (See Section 1.4.5.2)
N	Fail due to non-Submission which can not be compensated (See Section 1.4.5.2). No further attempt at module allowed

In the subsequent sections of these regulations, the postgraduate grade points will be referred to first, with the undergraduate equivalents appearing in brackets afterwards. (Eg 7 [4] = GP7 postgraduate, GP4 undergraduate.)

The results of your modules will be considered by an Examination Board, the membership of which will include all internal and external examiners appointed for the award. In addition, the Examination Board is responsible for considering your eligibility for progression to the next stage of your award; for determining any referral or retake requirements in modules for which a fail grade has been recorded; and for determining the classification of your award.

In determining the outcome of the assessment of your modules, this Board will consider your performance in relation to the assessment criteria of the modules and the contribution those modules make to the outcomes of the award.

If you are judged to have satisfied the module assessment criteria at threshold level, you will be awarded at least a Grade Point 7 [4] (pass) for the module. You will not be permitted a further attempt at any element of assessment for which you have been awarded a pass grade in order to improve your grade, unless a claim for extenuating circumstances is upheld.

1.4.5 Module Failure - what happens if I fail a module?

If you have failed to satisfy the assessment criteria of the module, you will be awarded a **fail grade** (Grade Points 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and 0 [Grade Points 3, 2, 1 and 0]). If you have failed to submit any assessment for the module, you will be given a **Grade Point N** (Fail due to non-submission) for the element(s) of the module and you will only be allowed a further attempt at that element(s) of the module at the discretion of the appropriate Board.

The credits for all modules, including failed modules, must be obtained in order for you to qualify for your chosen award and this can be done in one of the ways described below, which will be decided by the Examination Board.

1.4.5.1 Referral, Replacement and Retake

If the Assessment Board has reported a **Non-Compensatable Fail**, or if the Award Board decides not to award you credits by compensation (see 1.4.5.2 below) then you will be required to undergo further assessment on the subject matter covered by the module. This is in order to satisfy the Board that you are capable of meeting the appropriate learning outcomes and is known as “**referral**”. The form of assessment will be determined by the Examination Board, as will the deadline for submission/period of the examination.

The Examination Board may decide that along with a form of assessment you need to attend the classes for the module again. This may be because the module is laboratory based, or requires specialist equipment or because your performance indicates that you would benefit from attendance. In such cases, where your timetable does not prevent you from attending, attendance is compulsory. If you are not required to attend, you will normally be required to attempt the re-assessment before the beginning of the next academic year. You must make yourself available to undertake such assessment as the Examination Board requires at this time. If you do not meet the referral requirements determined by the Examination Board at the time prescribed by the Examination Board you will be deemed to have failed the module at that attempt.

The maximum mark awarded for a successfully completed referred element of assessment is a Grade Point 7 [Grade Point 4]. If your module comprises more than one element of assessment and the Examination Board refers you in one or more elements, the referred element(s) will be recorded at a maximum of Grade Point 7 [4]; those elements not subject to referral will retain their original mark. **The overall module grade will be suffixed R.**

If you have **failed an Option module** you may choose not to undertake the further assessment required by the Examination Board, but to **replace** the failed module with another of the same or greater credits. Option modules can only be replaced with modules from within the same option group and which make the same contribution to the award level outcomes. You cannot replace a Core module.

The suffix + will be used to indicate that it is a replacement module and for classification purposes GP7 [4] will be used. You should also read the glossary item on Replacement.

If I fail a module, can I resit it?

(i) If you made an attempt at your assessments at the first attempt:

You will only be guaranteed an opportunity to attempt a referral(s) **once IF, and only if**, you have made an attempt at the assessment(s) on the first occasion unless a claim for Extenuating Circumstances has been successful. If you fail to achieve a satisfactory performance in your referral attempt and are not awarded a compensated pass (see 1.4.5.2 below), then the module result will be deemed a Fail. You may, however, at the discretion of the Examination Board, be able to retake the module, except in circumstances where a GPN has been recorded for both the original attempt and the referral. In such cases, you will not be allowed to retake the module. Retaking a module means that you will have to undertake any elements of assessment attached to the module failed. The maximum mark for a retaken module is Grade Point 7 [4]. The suffix K will be used to indicate that it is a retaken module. If you fail one or more elements, your results will be treated as indicated in Section 1.4.5, except that retaken modules carry no reassessment entitlement. A module may be retaken on one occasion only. You should also read the glossary item on Retake.

(ii) If you did not make an attempt at your assessments at the first Attempt

If you do not submit work or attend assessments at the first attempt, that guarantee of a referral is lost and the appropriate Board will decide whether or not to allow you a referral. In making its decision, the Board may take account of your engagement with that module.

If the Board does allow you a referral(s) and you do not take the referral(s) at the time notified to you by your Faculty/School, no further referral opportunity will be given to you and you may fail the award.

Option modules which have been awarded a Fail (i.e. where no reassessment entitlement remains) may be replaced or retaken as previously described where this is possible. However, if you have exhausted all referral/retake opportunities for all modules in a specific option group, then you will not be able to meet the requirements of your chosen award and will not be permitted to continue on that award.

Core modules cannot be replaced. If you are awarded a Fail for a Core module then you will not be able to meet the requirements of your chosen award and will not be permitted to continue on that award.

When can I take my referral(s)

In all cases, if you are allowed a referral(s), the referral(s) must be taken at the

next referral opportunity. For most students, this will be in the August following your failure in the module(s) but will depend on the nature of your award and the timing of your assessments.

It is your responsibility to make sure that you know when you are required to resit.

1.4.5.2 Compensation

In certain circumstances, the Examination Board may decide that you should not be required to undertake further assessment of a failed element of assessment, but that the failure should be compensated. However, it should be noted that provision for compensation between modules is subject to award specific regulation as approved at validation. Compensation of failed assessment is not automatic.

What is Compensation?

Compensation is the awarding of credits for a failed module if you have demonstrated elsewhere in your modules your ability to satisfy the learning outcomes of your award.

Action of the Examination Board

The Examination Board has discretion to compensate failure of elements of assessment within a module, provided that the overall module grade is a pass (see 1.4.4 above). The compensated element will retain its original mark, the overall mark will be based on the weightings of the different elements and will be used for classification purposes.

Subject to any award specific regulations, the Examination Board has discretion to award the credits for a module in which a compensatable fail (ie GP 4, 5 or 6 [GP 2 or 3]) has been recorded. **The final decision lies with the Examination Board.** The result will be recorded as a 7C [4C] but the original Grade Point will be used in calculating the classification.

An overall **module grade point of 0, 1, 2 or 3 [0 or 1] or N may not be compensated.**

It should be noted that some awards within the University are accredited by a professional body. These professional bodies may have regulations which supersede those of the University in terms of compensation of failure. Your award documentation will include details where this is the case.

Where no Examination Boards have met at the end of a Teaching Block, provisional results may be issued but these are subject to confirmation by the Examination Board when it next meets. Consequently provisional results may be altered as a result of confirmation by the Examination Board process.

How many credits can be compensated?

Subject to award specific regulations, a maximum of 15 Level 7 credits may be awarded a compensated pass at the PgC stage and 30 Level 7 credits overall at the Diploma stage. No compensation is permitted at the Masters stage. Partial compensation of a module (ie awarding some, but not all, of the credits associated with a module) is not allowed.

No compensation may be applied at the PgC stage until at least 45 credits have been passed (i.e. at least GP7 [GP4] achieved). For students enrolled at the Diploma stage of an award, a maximum of 30 credits, only may be compensated – provided 120 credits have been studied and at least 90 credits have been passed (not including compensated modules).

Subject to award specific regulations, a maximum of 30 Level 7 credits studied as part of an Integrated Masters award may be awarded a compensated pass.

Exceptionally the Examination Board may refer to your previous attempt in determining the operation of compensation but only in cases where you have made an attempt at the reassessment. This decision is entirely at the Examination Board's discretion and will be considered on a case by case basis. Alternatively, the Examination Board may require the module to be retaken.

1.4.6 Extenuating Circumstances – what happens next if my claim is upheld?

If, having submitted a claim for extenuating circumstances, your claim is upheld, the Examination Board may take one of the following actions:

- i. confirm the grade achieved
- ii. exceptionally raise the grade based on sufficient evidence of your performance elsewhere

In the case of i or ii above, you will be given the opportunity **either to accept the grade achieved or submit for further assessment in that module (or components of that module)** which you had claimed had been affected by extenuating circumstances.

If you decide to submit for further assessment in the module (or components of that module) which were upheld to have been affected by extenuating circumstances, and you obtain a **higher** grade than the original grade, the **higher** grade will be recorded. If you obtain a **lower** grade than the original grade, the **original** grade will be recorded.

If you have had your claim for extenuating circumstances upheld against a number of modules (or components of modules) you must decide which modules (or components on modules), if any, you wish to submit for further assessment.

You must make that decision by informing your home Faculty/School, within ten working days of the decision of the relevant examination board being notified to you, in writing, which module(s) (or components of module(s)) you have decided

to submit for further assessment. A proforma for such purposes is available from your Faculty/School Office.

If you do not return the proforma within the ten working days specified, your home Faculty/School will assume that you do not wish to submit for further assessment. It is therefore your responsibility to abide by this deadline.

1.5 Progression – how do I progress from one Stage to another?

In order to progress from one stage of an award to another (ie PgC to PgD, PgD to Masters), you must normally obtain a Pass in all modules. Otherwise, award specific regulations must permit compensation of a failed module or retrieval of failure at a subsequent stage of your programme of study.

If you are studying an Integrated Masters award (MEng), in order to progress into the final (Masters) stage, you must have obtained a Pass in all undergraduate modules. You will not be allowed to retrieve failed undergraduate modules during your Masters year. In addition, you may be required to have achieved a designated minimum classification in the undergraduate stages of your award in order to be able to progress into the Masters stage. Your award documentation will indicate if this is the case.

1.6 The Conferment of Awards

1.6.1 Eligibility for your Award

Once you reach the end of your award the Examination Board for your award will consider whether you have met all the learning outcomes and the credit requirements for successful completion of the award (see also sections on module enrolment and student workload). If you have met the requirements the Examination Board will grant you that award. At the same time they will also consider whether you should be awarded a Merit or Distinction.

The Examination Board will determine the course of action for retrieval of any failed modules, as previously described. If you are to retrieve a failure by referral (or retake or replacement where applicable) you will not be considered for the award until that referral (or retake or replacement) is successfully completed.

If you have exhausted all referral, replacement or retake entitlements for a module and compensation is not applied, your module failure will be confirmed. This will render you ineligible for the award on which you are enrolled at this stage and the Examination Board will consider your eligibility for a lower or an intermediate award (PgC or PgD).

1.6.2 Classification of Awards

Examination Boards have the discretion to make awards at Pass, Merit and Distinction at the Certificate, Diploma and Masters stages.

Your eligibility for awards with Merit or Distinction will be determined using the average grade point per 15 credits studied.

1.6.3 Criteria for Pass

If you have enrolled for a **Postgraduate Certificate**, have completed the requirements of your award and have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 15 credits, and your average grade point is between 7.00 and 9.49, you will be awarded a **Pass** in your Postgraduate Certificate.

If you have enrolled for a **Postgraduate Diploma**, have completed the requirements for your award and have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 30 credits, and your average grade point is between 7.00 and 9.49, you will be awarded a **Pass** in your Postgraduate Diploma.

If you have enrolled for a **Masters award**, have completed the requirements for your award and have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 30 credits, and your average grade point is between 7.00 and 9.49, you will be awarded a **Pass** in your Masters Degree.

No award can be given if your Grade Point Average is below 7.00

1.6.4 Criteria for awards with Merit

Postgraduate Certificate

If you have enrolled for a **Postgraduate Certificate**, have completed the requirements of your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 15 credits, **and** have achieved a Grade Point Average of 9.5 to 12.49, you **will** be awarded a **Postgraduate Certificate with Merit**

If you have enrolled for a **Postgraduate Certificate**, have completed the requirements of your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 15 credits, **and** if at least 50% of the masters credits achieved are in the merit range (ie GPs 10-12) or above, you **may** be awarded a **Postgraduate Certificate with Merit**

Postgraduate Diploma

If you have enrolled for a **Postgraduate Diploma**, have completed the requirements of your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 30 credits, and have achieved a Grade Point Average of 9.5 to 12.49, you **will** be awarded a **Postgraduate Diploma with Merit**

If you have enrolled for a **Postgraduate Diploma**, have completed the requirements of your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all

your modules or been compensated in no more than 30 credits, **and** if at least 50% of the masters credits achieved are in the merit range (ie GPs 10-12) or above, you **may** be awarded a **Postgraduate Diploma with Merit**

Masters

If you have enrolled for a **Masters award**, have completed the requirements of your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 30 credits, and have achieved a Grade Point Average of 9.5 to 12.49, you **will** be awarded a **Masters Degree with Merit**.

If you have enrolled for a **Masters award**, have completed the requirements of your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 30 credits, **and** if at least 50% of the masters credits achieved are in the merit range (ie GPs 10-12) or above, including the Dissertation or Project, you **may** be awarded a **Masters Degree with Merit**

1.6.5 Criteria for awards with Distinction

Postgraduate Certificate

If you have enrolled for a **Postgraduate Certificate**, have completed the requirements of your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 15 credits, and have achieved a Grade Point Average of 12.5 or above, you **will** be awarded a **Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction**

If you have enrolled for a **Postgraduate Certificate**, have completed the requirements of your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 15 credits, **and** if at least 50% of the masters credits achieved are in the distinction range (ie GPs 13-15), you **may** be awarded a **Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction**

Postgraduate Diploma

If you have enrolled for a **Postgraduate Diploma**, have completed the requirements of your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 30 credits, and have achieved a Grade Point Average of 12.5 or above, you **will** be awarded a **Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction**.

If you have enrolled for a **Postgraduate Diploma**, have completed the requirements of your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 30 credits, **and** if at least 50% of the masters credits achieved are in the distinction range (ie GPs 13-15), you **may** be awarded a **Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction**

Masters

If you have enrolled for a **Masters award**, have completed the requirements of

your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 30 credits, and have achieved a Grade Point Average of 12.5 or above, you **will** be awarded a **Masters Degree with Distinction**.

If you have enrolled for a **Masters award**, have completed the requirements of your award, have achieved a Grade Point 7[4] or above in all your modules or been compensated in no more than 30 credits, **and** if at least 50% of the masters credits achieved are in the distinction range (ie GPs 13-15) , including the Dissertation or Project, you **may** be awarded a **Masters Degree with Distinction**

1.6.6 Integrated Masters Awards

If you are enrolled on the Masters stage of an **Integrated Masters award**, have completed the requirements of your award and have achieved a Grade Point 7 or above in all your masters stage modules or been compensated in no more than 30 credits and achieved an overall Average Grade Point between 7.00 and 9.49, you will be awarded a **Pass** in your award.

If you have completed the requirements of your award and been compensated in no more than 30 credits and have achieved a Grade Point Average of 9.5 to 12.49 in the masters modules, you will be awarded a **Merit** in your award.

If you have completed the requirements of your award and been compensated in no more than 30 credits and have achieved a Grade Point Average of at least 12.5 in the masters modules, you will be awarded a **Distinction** in your award.

1.6.7 Award of a Degree where Extenuating Circumstances have been upheld

Where a claim for extenuating circumstances has been upheld, the Examination Board may determine an appropriate degree classification based on sufficient evidence of your ability at Level M (ie assessment results). The Board has discretion to award the appropriate degree classification based on that evidence. In such cases you will be given the opportunity to accept the classification of the award or retake any of the assessments 'as if for the first time' (if the assessment was your first attempt) or 'as if for the second time' (if the assessment was a referral).

1.6.8 Awarding of credit through the Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L).

If you have been awarded credit through the Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L) scheme, you will have been exempted from taking certain modules. These modules will be recorded on your profile as Grade Point 7E and this grade will not be taken into account when calculating your average grade point for classification purposes. See the University's Policy and Student Handbook at:

www.staffs.ac.uk/images/apel_policy_tcm68-12793.pdf and www.staffs.ac.uk/imaages/apel_policy_studenthbook_tcm68-12705.pdf respectively.

1.7 Aegrotat Awards

Where a claim for extenuating circumstances due to **ill health** has been upheld and you have **not been able to meet fully the learning outcomes** of the award, the Examination Board may decide to confer an **Aegrotat award**.

In instances where such awards are conferred, the Examination Board must offer you the choice to accept the award or attempt assessment in the normal way in order to try to achieve a Masters Degree if this is the award on which you are enrolled.

1.8 Review of an Examination Board Decision – how do I ask for the Examination Board’s decision to be reviewed?

Students who wish to request a review of an Examination Board decision may do so in accordance with the appropriate University’s Procedures for Review of an Examination Board Decision as detailed in the University’s Academic Awards Regulations.

[www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/Review%20of%20Exam%20Decision%20\(2\)_tcm-26765.pdf](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/assets/Review%20of%20Exam%20Decision%20(2)_tcm-26765.pdf)

1.9 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AP(E)L/ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR (EXPERIENTIAL) LEARNING

The accreditation of prior learning is the term used when a student uses his or her previous experiences to gain admission to a programme of study; admission to a module; admission at an intermediate stage in a programme (advanced standing); or to gain exemption from part of a programme of study. These previous experiences may be work-based learning, general learning experiences (experiential) or certificated qualifications.

See the University’s Policy at www.staffs.ac.uk/images/apel_policy_student_hbook_tcm68-12705.pdf for full details

Where you have gained exemption from a module through the AP(E)L scheme and there is a very close match between your prior (experiential) learning and the content of the module you will normally be awarded specific credit for that module. This means that your prior learning takes the place of the module in your programme of study. The “result” recorded shall be Pass/Grade Point 7. The suffix E will be used to indicate that credits for the module have been awarded through the AP(E)L scheme. The result will be recorded as 7E.

A mechanism has been developed in order to ensure that if you have been granted credit through the AP(E)L scheme you will not be disadvantaged when the Award Board determines your overall classification. The credits attached to Modules awarded a Grade Point 7E will count towards the overall credits required for your award, but will not be used in calculating the grade point averages which form the basis of the classification of your award.

Where there is regular accreditation of particular qualifications/experiences for particular awards, the award team must specify the number of credits which can be accredited for those qualifications/experiences.

AEGROTAT DEGREE

An Aegrotat Degree is an Award of Staffordshire University which is awarded in cases where illness or other due cause have prevented a student from providing the Award Board with sufficient evidence (assessment results) upon which to determine an appropriate classification.

ASSESSMENT BOARD

The Assessment Board of each subject area will consider all assessment marks of all modules available within that subject area, irrespective of which named awards the students may have registered for. It is bound to operate within these Regulations.

Assessment Boards meet at least once in each academic year normally at the end of the second teaching block. Faculties which wish to do so may also hold an Assessment Board at the end of the first teaching block. Where the Assessment Board has approved reassessment in one or more modules before the beginning of the next academic year, the Assessment Board will be required to meet before the start of the next academic year to determine results.

The functions of the Assessment Board are as follows:-

- a) to determine the appropriate Result/Grade Point for each student for each module in accordance with the Assessment Referencing Criteria for the module and to pass these to the appropriate Award Boards.
- a) to determine appropriate results for failed modules (in accordance with the module's Assessment Referencing Criteria) and, in so doing, to identify which modules may be awarded a Compensated Pass by the appropriate Award Board.
- b) to make recommendations to appropriate Award Boards about referral requirements for failed modules.
- c) to ensure parity of treatment of students within modules and across the subject area.
- d) to note where extenuating circumstances have been upheld and to make recommendations based on this to the Award Board.

Assessment Boards should note that where recommendations are made to Award Boards those Award Boards shall consider the recommendations but are

not obliged to act upon them. This is because Award Boards will have complete information on a student's profile, whereas Assessment Boards only have information on the student's performance in modules within the subject area.

It is the duty of the Faculty/School responsible for the management of a particular field to determine the membership of its Assessment Board(s). Its composition shall be:-

- a) The Dean of Faculty/School or his/her nominee (who shall be Chair).
- b) The internal examiners for the modules under consideration including all teaching staff responsible for setting and marking any assessment to be considered by the Board.
- c) The approved External Examiners.

The role of the External Examiners shall be:

- a) to consider distribution/spread of Grade Points within modules and across the subject area and to assist the Board to confirm appropriate module results.
- b) to ensure comparability of standards across institutional boundaries.
- c) to ensure parity of treatment of students both within each module and across the subject area.

In carrying out his/her role the External Examiner may consider any appropriate assessed work.

Students who wish to request a review of an Assessment Board decision may do so in accordance with the appropriate University's Procedures for Review of an Examination Board Decision as detailed in the University's Academic Awards Regulations.

AWARD BOARD

Each named award will have an Award Board which will determine the final outcomes of the students registered for that award. The Award Board will receive the results of the module assessments agreed by all contributing Assessment Boards. Award Boards will normally meet at the end of the second teaching block of an Academic Year. Where necessary they may also meet at other times of the year - notably after Assessment Boards have met to consider referral assessments and when awards are completed at the end of Teaching block 1. Award Boards are bound to operate within these Regulations.

Award Boards cannot change the Grade Point/Result awarded by an Assessment Board.

It is the duty of the Faculty/School responsible for the management of the Named Awards to determine the membership of its Award Boards. The composition of the Award Board shall be:-

- a) Dean of Faculty/School of the Faculty/School responsible for the award or his/her nominee (who shall be Chair).
- b) The Award Leader.
- c) A representative of each subject area contributing core or option modules to the Named Award to contribute to the discussions in relation to those modules.
- d) The approved External Examiners for the Award under consideration.

The functions of the Award Board are as follows:-

- a) to consider the individual student results profile as determined by the Assessment Boards.
- b) to award credits associated with successfully completed modules
- c) to operate compensation in accordance with these Regulations where appropriate
- d) to receive recommendations from Assessment Boards and agree arrangements for reassessment of failed modules/components of modules..
- e) to note exemptions granted.
- f) to confirm students' eligibility to proceed to the next Level of an Award
- g) to agree individual awards including classification where relevant and to recommend the award of qualifications to the Academic Board.
- h) to receive results on individual extenuating circumstances claims and ratify the recommendations of Assessment Boards ensuring compatibility/equality of treatment in each case.

The role of the External Examiners shall be to ensure that the University Regulations are applied consistently and objectively to all candidates.

Students who wish to request a review of an Award Board decision may do so in accordance with the appropriate University's Procedures for Review of an Examination Board Decision as detailed in the University's Academic Awards Regulations.

AWARD STRUCTURE

An Award Structure is the set of modules which comprise a named award. It is the specification of Core and Option modules which define that award and which is approved at validation. The credits for the modules specified in an award structure are called specific credits.

CATS

CATS is an acronym for the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme to which Staffordshire University subscribes. This scheme represents a system of points or credit rating for all awards which is recognised by all Higher Education Institutions which subscribe to the scheme. These credits are also referred to as CATS points.

CO-REQUISITE

A co-requisite is a module which must be studied in addition to and normally at the same time as a particular module.

CREDIT

Credits are the number of points earned by a student for completion of modules. Each module will be worth a specified number of credits, normally associated with the total learning time required for successful completion of that module. The credit rating of all modules is normally either 15 or a multiple of 15. See also CATS.

GRADE POINTS

A Grade Point is the result awarded to a student as a measure of performance in the assessment of modules at all Levels. The Grade Point scale has been devised to resolve the different marking scales used by subject areas and to translate those scales into a judgement which can be understood by all. Grade Points are determined by Assessment Boards by relating performance in assessment to the Assessment Referencing Criteria specific to the module. They can also be related to classifications as detailed in the Module Results/Assessment Referencing section of these Regulations.

MODULE

A module is a unit of study attracting a given number of credits at a particular level in direct proportion to its total learning time. The total learning time per credit is 10 hours, which includes student/staff contact time (lectures, practical classes, seminars, tutorials etc.), independent study and assessment. No module can attract fewer than 15 credits, and therefore the minimum total learning time for a module is 150 hours. Multiple modules are sized in multiples of 15 credits. Each module shall be assigned to a credit Level or Levels when approved.

Some modules which are larger than 15 credits are delivered over two teaching blocks. These are often referred to as serial or “long-thin” modules. Some modules which are larger than 15 credits are delivered wholly within one teaching block. These are often referred to as parallel or “short-fat” modules. It is your responsibility to make sure you know the delivery pattern of all multiple modules for which you enrol.

Students may be allowed to exit from certain serial modules at the end of the first teaching block. Such students will be assessed on work completed and, if successful in that assessment, shall be awarded credits in relation to the total learning time thus far.

CORE MODULES

Core modules are those which must be passed in order to gain a particular named award. They are specified as part of the award structure and form the central pillar of the award. Core modules attract specific credit for an award.

OPTION MODULES

Option modules are those which you must select from within a prescribed set for your award. They are sometimes referred to as specific options. Option modules attract specific credit for an award.

NAMED AWARD

A named award is a validated award identified by a specific Award Structure and ratified by the University's Academic Board.

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Your programme of study is your overall choice of modules which may be unique to each individual student because of the elements of choice involved in awards (Option, and General Option modules).

PRE-REQUISITE

There are some modules within the University which you will not be allowed to study unless you have met certain conditions. In some cases the conditions will be that you have first achieved pass grades in certain other modules at a lower Level. These other modules are known as pre-requisites for the module in question. In some cases a pre-requisite may be one out of a group of specified modules. You will not be allowed to study any modules for which you have not met the pre-requisites, even if you have been allowed to progress to the Level of that module.

PROGRESSION

The concept of progression stems from academic development. It is expected that during the course of your studies you will acquire certain skills, understanding and knowledge and that as you continue your studies these will develop to enable you to "move on" to more advanced academic activities. This concept is manifested in the requirement that you must achieve pass grades in a certain proportion of your programme of study at any one stage before your academic capabilities are deemed to be sufficiently developed for you to move on, or "progress" to the next stage of the award. Successful completion of assessment within modules is used as the measure of your academic development. The proportions of your programme of study which must be successfully completed for progression to the next stage of your award are detailed under Progression within the main body of these Regulations. Even if you have been allowed to progress to the next stage of your award you will not

be allowed to study any module at that stage for which you have not met the pre-requisites.

PROHIBITED COMBINATIONS

Where two (or more) modules contain content which is similar in nature or where there is a significant overlap in curriculum you will not normally be allowed to study them both. They will therefore be designated a prohibited combination.

REFERRAL

When your performance in assessment for a module has been unsatisfactory the Award Board may require you to undergo further assessment on the subject matter covered by the module. This further assessment is known as a referral. The purpose of a referral is to satisfy the Board that you are capable of a satisfactory performance in the module. You must make yourself available to undertake such assessment as the Award Board requires at this time. If you do not meet the referral requirements determined by the Award Board at the date prescribed by the Award Board you will be deemed to have failed the module at that attempt. The maximum mark awarded for a successfully completed referred module is a Grade Point 7. The suffix R is used to indicate that the module was successfully completed only at the second attempt. The result will be recorded as 7R.

If a module comprises more than one element of assessment and the Award Board refers you in one or more elements, the referred element(s) will be recorded at a maximum of Grade Point 7; those elements not subject to referral will retain their original mark. The overall module grade will be suffixed R.

REPLACEMENT

If you have not been awarded a pass grade in any Option module you may choose to replace that module with another. This is known as replacement, and the module which takes the place of the failed module is a replacement module.

Replacement Option modules (specific credits) must be taken from within the same option group within your award structure as the failed module. Core modules cannot normally be replaced.

You may opt to replace a failed module after the first or second failed attempt. If you opt to replace a module you forfeit any remaining referral entitlement on the original failed module. You will be granted the full retake entitlement appropriate to the replacement module (i.e. two attempts if the replacement module is at Level 7).

The number of times a module can be replaced is limited where the replacement must be taken from a specific group or set of groups. Once all the

modules within that group or groups have been exhausted no more replacement can take place. The number of replacements which can be made is also restricted in that you have only five years in which to complete the whole Masters award.

The maximum mark awarded for a successfully completed replacement module is a Grade Point 7. The suffix + will be used to indicate that the original module was not successfully completed. The result will be recorded as 7+. You may not opt to replace a module which you have passed in order to try to improve upon your result.

RETAKE

Where your performance in assessment for a module has been unsatisfactory on two occasions (ie in the original attempt and the referral attempt), the Award Board has the discretion to allow you to Retake the module, as long as you have made an attempt at the assessment on at least the first occasion.

If the Board allows you a Retake, you will be required to undertake any failed elements of assessment in the module. The maximum mark for a retaken module is a Grade Point 7 (postgraduate modules) or Point 4 (undergraduate modules) and the suffix K will be used to indicate that it is a retaken module.

The Board will determine whether you will be required to retake the module with or without further attendance.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

There are some modules within the University which you will not be allowed to study unless you have met certain conditions. One of these conditions may be that you have first studied (not necessarily successfully completed) certain other modules. These conditions are known as special admissions requirements for the module in question.

Special Admissions Requirements are not always related to the study of specific modules. In some cases you will be required to have completed certain other qualifications outside the University or have undergone particular experiences. In some cases a special admissions requirement may be one out of a group of specified requirements. There may also be some award specific admissions requirements for particular awards.

SUBJECT AREA

A subject area is defined as the staff with academic expertise in that subject and the modules for which those staff take responsibility. Every module is owned by a subject area and which takes full responsibility for the delivery, assessment and management of modules within its remit. Assessment Boards consider the results of students' performance in all the modules within a given subject area; the membership of an Assessment Board will therefore be largely subject area based.

TEACHING BLOCK

The academic year is divided into two periods known as teaching blocks each of which will normally include periods of both teaching and assessment.

TRANSCRIPT

Once an Award Board has confirmed your results you will receive a results profile from the Faculty/School in which your award is based. It will show, for each module you have successfully completed, the module code and title, the associated credits (CATS points), the Level of the module and the Grade Point/Result achieved. The transcript will not show your classification.

A Transcript will also be provided for graduating students with their certificate and may be requested by other students by writing to the Information Centre. A fee will be charged for duplicate copies of transcripts. The Transcript includes all the information shown on the Profile of Results but additionally includes your classification and details of all modules passed at the first attempt or as a result of compensation, condonation, referral or replacement.

Staffordshire University's commitment to equality and diversity means that this policy has been screened in relation to the use of gender-neutral language, jargon-free plain English, recognition of the needs of disabled people, promotion of the positive duty in relation to race and disability and avoidance of stereotypes. This document is available in alternative formats on request. If you think we can improve the fairness of this policy, please contact the individual who has responsibility for its update.