



Postgraduate [Progression and] Award Regulations

2026-27

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Qualifications covered by these Postgraduate Award Regulations

Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip)
Masters Degrees*
European Master's Degrees
Masters of Research

*Includes Double, Dual and Joint awards

An explanation of these qualifications, including the amount of credit required for the award of these qualifications, is available in the [Sussex Academic Framework](#).

Postgraduate Award Regulations

Introduction

1. The Postgraduate Award Regulations are part of the University's Academic Regulations approved by Senate.
2. These Regulations form part of a complementary set of documentation, which is reviewed on a regular basis and can be found here [Regulations for examinations and assessment](#)
3. These Postgraduate Regulations operate on the basis of a set of agreed principles:
 - Academic standards and professional requirements will remain paramount to safeguard the integrity of university awards
 - The regulations will align with external requirements in force [including the Office for Students (OfS) conditions of registration, the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) and sector best practice].
 - Where courses are governed by Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements, permitted derogations to enable compliance with PSRB requirements may be permitted with the approval of the Pro Vice Chancellor (PVC) (Education and Students)
 - Clear, consistent and transparent application of these regulations
 - Students will be treated in a fair and equitable manner
 - The University's examination boards will make decisions which support student retention, progression and achievement by enabling students to complete/achieve the highest potential award in the shortest timeframe.

Status of the Postgraduate Regulations

4. Senate is responsible for the overall academic standards of each postgraduate award made by the University.
5. These Regulations will be published annually before the start of the academic year on the University of Sussex website and are incorporated by reference into the Postgraduate Student Terms and Conditions each academic year.
6. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (PVC) (Education and Students) can recommend to the Vice Chancellor (VC) the suspension, amendment, or revocation of any part of these regulations (see also para 9).

Exceptions to these Regulations

7. These Regulations may be varied by the University Education Committee (UEC) or the PVC (Education and Students) in their capacity as Chair of the UEC for course derogations, cohort allowances or individual inequitable outcomes.

Course Derogations

- a. Where courses additionally lead to awards or accreditation by Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) these may be subject to other rules or regulations which will be approved by the UEC. These are called derogations.

Cohort Allowances, scaling, reweighting, unforeseen cohort experiences

- b. Where the application of the Regulations requires an exception for a particular cohort or where there have been in-year regulatory changes, an Allowance may be required.

Individual Inequitable Outcomes (IIO)

- c. Where the strict application of the Regulations would result in an unintended, manifestly unfair outcome for a student(s), taking into account the particular circumstances, an exception for that student(s) may be required.

Review of these Postgraduate Regulations

8. The University will identify necessary changes and improvements to the Academic Regulations during an academic year, to take effect in the next academic year.
9. Exceptionally, regulatory changes may be adopted within the academic year. Such changes will only be approved where there is sufficient evidence that the changes are necessary to protect academic standards, or to ensure fairness to all students. Where this is necessary students will be notified by written communication which will explain the nature of the change and any impact this change may have to their course (see also para 6).
10. The University will also undertake a systematic and detailed evaluation of its academic regulations on a periodic cycle at least every six years.

Section 1: Student Registration

General requirements

11. Students are not usually permitted to register for more than one taught programme of study leading to an award of the University at the same time, unless with the permission of the Director for the Student Experience (or their nominee).

Periods of registration

12. The [Sussex Academic Framework](#) articulates the minimum and maximum periods of registration.

Recognition of Prior Learning

13. Prospective students may make an application to the University for admission for Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL), based on credits previously achieved or Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL), based on experience of professional/employer-based awards. The University's Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure is published at: [Recognition of prior learning](#).

Modules as short courses

Students may be allowed to register for modules to be assessed for credit without being registered for an award. The University Recognition of Prior Learning Policy will apply, if the student subsequently wishes to transfer the credit for admission with prior certificated learning to an award of the University.

Module registration

14. Students may be allowed to register for modules to be assessed for credit without being registered for an award.

Temporary Withdrawal from the University

15. Where major changes have been made to the curriculum, it may not be possible for a student returning from a temporary leave of absence to be offered either a

sit/resit of missed or failed assessments. In these circumstances the student will be required to restart at the beginning of the relevant semester or stage.

Permanent Withdrawal

16. Where a student has permanently withdrawn, a Progression and Award Board (PAB) will determine any outcomes, including an exit award, from assessment completed prior to withdrawal.

Section 2: Courses & Modules

General

17. All Postgraduate courses leading to an award of the University are credit-bearing.
18. A taught masters course is defined as a single stage of postgraduate study irrespective of the duration of study (full-time or part-time).
19. Credit is usually module specific and is available upon completion of the module.
20. Modules may have:
 - Pre-requisites – a pre-requisite module must be passed, or studied, before the study of the module which requires it can be commenced
 - Co-requisites – two or more modules must be studied in parallel.

Variation of study

21. All courses are validated as coherent programmes of study. Requests for a variation of study can be exceptionally permitted upon application and can be approved subject to the necessary criteria being met. See [Variation of Study : Curriculum](#).
22. An application for a variation of study may be rejected on the grounds of academic judgement, having given due regard to the learning outcomes of the course.
23. The requirements of a PSRB will take precedence to any variation of study.

Placement Years

24. All placement years are subject to acceptance by the employer, and to any relevant visa requirements.
25. For placement years, the assessment will be based on the assessment set and marked by the University.

Section 3: Assessment

General Principles

26. The purpose of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the appropriate learning outcomes, skills and competence standards (where applicable) of their course of study and have achieved the standard required for an award.
27. The University's expectations in respect of assessment design, marking, moderation and the conduct of examinations are set out in the Procedures for [Marking, Moderation and Feedback](#), and [Delivery of Examinations Procedures](#).

Modes of Assessment

28. The University uses a range of approved modes of assessment. The types and their descriptors are set out in [Sussex Academic Framework](#).
29. Detailed information about the assessment for each module is agreed by the Faculty/School Education Committee (SEC).
30. Students will be provided with detailed information about the assessment for each module. Details of assessments including the dates and times for examinations will be published on Sussex Direct.
31. Standard assessment methods may be varied for students with a disability. See [Students with a Disclosed Disability](#).
32. Alternative modes of assessment for Visiting and Exchange students should be provided where the student will no longer be in attendance at the University.

Assessment Requirements

33. A student registered for a module will be deemed to have attempted the module unless notice of withdrawal or transfer has been submitted in writing by published deadlines.
34. Where a specific level of attendance is required to be eligible for assessment in the module, this should be clearly stated and agreed at the validation of the course.

Academic misconduct

35. All students are expected to follow the University's Academic Integrity Values, to avoid academic misconduct. See [Academic Misconduct Policy and associated procedures and guidance](#).

Late submission

36. Where a student submits an assessment beyond the original published deadline without explicit authorisation, a penalty deduction will be applied. See [Late Submission Penalty Framework](#).

Late submission – reasonable adjustments

37. A student may be provided with a 7-day extension to a submission deadline as an approved Reasonable Adjustment, after which the standard late submission window and penalties will apply.

Non-Submission

38. When an assessment is not submitted, it will be counted as an attempt and a mark of 0% recorded.

Exceptional Circumstances

39. Students experiencing short-term, unexpected circumstances that are beyond their control that negatively impacts their ability to study, prepare or complete an assessment or exam may submit an Exceptional Circumstances (EC) claim.
40. Where an Exceptional Circumstances claim that relates to the application of a penalty for late submission has been accepted, the penalty will be removed.

Marks and Grades

41. Where a marking scale is employed, a numerical scale of 0-100 will be applied. Decimal places are not used on single assessments.
42. The mark for a module will be a whole number rounded up where the actual mark is equal to or greater than 0.45% and rounded down where the actual mark is equal to or less than 0.44%.

43. Modules can be designated at validation as pass/fail. The credits awarded for pass/fail modules contribute to the award.
44. A pass mark for a module depends on the level of the module and not on the level of the award:
 - Modules at level 7 have a pass mark of 50%.

Examination Boards

45. Examination boards act in accordance with the [Examination Board Procedures](#) which set out the responsibilities and membership of Module Assessment Boards (MABs) and Progression and Award Boards (PABs).

Maximum number of assessment attempts

46. The maximum number of assessment attempts permitted for a student to fulfil the learning outcomes of a module is 3 comprising:
 - First (initial) attempt
 - One resit attempt
 - One discretionary second resit

See also para 70.

Section 4: Reassessment

General Principles

47. The University applies the following threshold pass mark:

Level of module	Threshold pass mark
Level 7	50%

48. Reassessment will only be offered for modules where a student has not achieved the threshold pass mark for a module.
49. A resit may also be offered where additional PSRB requirements for passing a module have not been achieved.
50. The timing of resits, including guidance on approval routes for variation, are set out in [Delivery of Examinations guidance](#).

Forms of reassessment

51. The University operates the following forms of reassessment:

Resit	A further attempt of those elements of assessment within a module that have not been passed. This is usually within the same academic year and does not require additional teaching and learning.
Sit	This is where a student is permitted to retake an assessment(s) for an uncapped mark on the basis of an approved Exceptional Circumstances claim. This is usually within the same academic year and does not require additional teaching and learning.
Trailed resit	This is where a student is permitted to progress to the next stage of study with an outstanding failed module(s). The student is registered for the outstanding credit alongside their study in the next stage, no additional teaching and learning is required for the trailed module. The resit assessment will be taken in the reassessment period for the module.

Reassessment following failure at the first attempt

52. Following failure at the first attempt, reassessment by resit will usually be agreed by the PAB.

53. Where on practical grounds, it is not possible to offer a student a reassessment by resit, in order to demonstrate achievement of the associated learning outcomes, then a student may be required to repeat the module or stage.

Maximum credit load for reassessment by resit following failure at the first attempt

54. Following failure at the first attempt, a resit in all failed modules may be permitted unless there is no evidence of assessment attempt or submission with a credit bearing module during that stage of study. In such circumstances, the PAB will usually terminate the student's registration.
55. A student will be considered for an exit award appropriate to the credit achieved.

Reassessment with accepted Exceptional Circumstances

56. Where a student has an accepted Exceptional Circumstances (EC) claim, the PAB may offer a sit for an uncapped mark in accordance with the weighting of the accepted EC.
57. No setting aside of missed, failed or impaired assessments, or components of assessment is permitted, unless exceptionally, the assessment has been reweighted for the whole student cohort.
58. In cases where the sit offered is not taken, the original marks(s) achieved will stand for progression and award purposes.

Modules exceptionally exempted from providing a resit attempt

59. In some cases, the nature of the assessment may preclude a resit attempt. In such cases a student failing to pass the module may instead be required to repeat the module or stage in order to demonstrate relevant learning outcomes and obtain the relevant credit.
60. Any exemptions must be approved by the University Education Committee and clearly published to students.

Retrieving credit in the following academic year

61. Progression and Award Boards (PAB) may consider the mechanisms for the retrieval of credit.
62. A PAB may judge that no further reassessment can be permitted and terminate a student's registration.
63. Exceptionally, a PAB may make a request to the PVC (Education and Students) to offer a further academic year to achieve credits for that stage of study.

Repeat stages of study

64. A repeat of a stage of study means that a student restarts all the modules associated with the stage and takes part in all teaching and learning and takes all assessment. All previous marks and credit relating to the repeat stage are removed from the student record for progression and award purposes.

Limits on the offer of a repeat stage

65. A repeat stage may not be given where the stage has already been repeated or second resits without attendance have already been granted by a PAB.

Repeat of a semester

66. The PAB may agree to offer a repeat of a semester instead of the whole stage, provided that 60 credits have been secured in the other semester.

Conditions applied to a repeat stage/semester

67. A student offered a repeat stage/semester of study will be required to abide with the conditions set out in the University Repeat Year Learning Agreement. See [Learning Agreement guidance and form](#).

Repeat of a module

68. Exceptionally, a PAB may offer the repeat of a module up to maximum of 30 credits where the course structure does not permit a failed module to be trailed.

Discretionary second (2nd) resit without attendance in the next academic year

69. A Progression and Award Board (PAB) has the discretion to offer a second (2nd) and final resit(s) for a failed module(s) up to a maximum of 60 credits, provided at least 60 credits have been achieved in the remaining modules at the stage.

Limits on the use of discretionary second (2nd) resits

70. A discretionary second resit may not be given where the stage has already been repeated.

Marginal Failure

71. The University defines marginal failure in a module as follows:

Level of module	Marginal fail band
Level 7	Marks of 45 – 49%

Compensation for Module Failure

72. Once a student has studied the required modules for a stage/level, the PAB will automatically compensate module(s), up to a maximum of 30 credits, with a marginal fail mark.
73. Automatic compensation will be applied as follows:

Stage	Limit	Criteria to be met
Level 7	Up to a maximum of 30 credits. The compensation may apply after failure at the first attempt or failure following reassessment.	Achievement of an uncapped stage mean of 50% in the final stage of an Integrated Masters course (level 7)

74. The mark for the compensated module(s) will remain as the actual mark achieved for progression and award purposes and the credits awarded.

Limits on the use of compensation

75. A PAB may not compensate a module failure that is a result of academic misconduct.
76. A PAB may not compensate a research project or dissertation.
77. By exception, a course may require additional criteria for the use of compensation or may not permit the use of compensation at all. See [Approved Derogations to UG and PGT Progression and Award Regulations](#).

Discretionary condoned credit

78. The PAB has the discretionary authority to award up to a maximum of 30 condoned credits in the final award stage where:
- The course learning outcomes have been met, and
 - The relevant uncapped stage mean in the final stage has been achieved as follows:

Type of Award	Criteria to be met
Taught Postgraduate degree	Uncapped stage mean of 50%

79. Where condonement is applied the mark achieved will remain as the mark achieved for award purposes and the credits awarded.
80. For Online Distance Learning (ODL) courses, condoned credit may be awarded for a designated research project/dissertation module where the above criteria are met.

Limits on the use of condonement

81. A PAB may not condone a module failed as a result of academic misconduct.
82. A PAB may not condone a research project or dissertation.

Limits on the combined use of compensated credit

83. A maximum of 30 credits may be granted via a combination of compensation and condonement in the final award stage.

84. Where more than 30 credits have been failed a PAB can give a resit.

Optional resits following the use of compensation or condonement

85. Where condonement has been applied, the student will be provided with a single optional resit which the student may choose to take instead of receiving the credit via compensated or condoned credit.
86. The PAB may use their discretion to offer a single optional resit where compensation has been applied instead of receiving the credit via compensated credit.
87. Marks achieved will be capped at the minimum threshold pass mark and will contribute to progression and award decisions.
88. No further optional resit opportunity will usually be given where an optional resit is compensated or condoned.
89. Standard requirements regarding resit modes, resit marks, capping and resit scheduling apply.

Circumstances where a sit may be determined outside the PAB

90. Very occasionally a sit may be offered outside of the consideration of the PAB. Where appropriate, the marks array presented to the PAB will indicate that a sit of the resit mode as already been given.

Section 5: Progression

Progression of Part-time students

91. A part-time student's progress must be considered at the summer PAB during each year of study.
92. The roles, responsibilities and membership of Progression and Award Boards (PABs) is set out in the [Examination Board policy and procedures](#).

Section 6: Awards

General

93. A PAB will consider students for an award on the first occasion that they have achieved the minimum required modules and a capped stage mean of 50%.
94. In all cases the capped stage mean is used for award purposes.

Overall framework for classification

95. Postgraduate awards will be classified using the following overall framework:

An overall grand mean of 70 – 100% with 50% of the credit at 70 or above	Distinction
An overall grand mean of 60 – 69% with 50% of the credit at 60 or above	Merit
An overall grand mean of 50 – 59%	Pass

Rounding

96. In all cases, where the grand mean average creates a mark of 0.45% or greater, this will be rounded up to the next full percentage point.

Borderline Zone

97. The University operates a borderline zone at each of the classification boundaries.
98. The PAB will uplift into the higher classification if the student has:
- A grand mean mark of up to 1% below the classification boundary, and
 - 50% or more of the credit that contributes to the award in the higher classification band
99. Exceptional circumstances do not provide grounds for reclassification of an award.

Award Regulations

100. PABs will apply the following criteria to determine award outcomes:

Award	Requirements
Masters award	A student who is registered for the award of Masters Degree will be considered for the award on completion of: • Not less than 180 credits at the prescribed level • Of which at least 150 credits must be at level 7 • A capped stage mean of 50% across the stage The credit requirement may include condoned and compensated credit where this has been given by the PAB.
Postgraduate Diploma	A student who is registered for the award of Postgraduate Diploma will be considered for the award on completion of: • Not less than 120 credits, with at least 90 credits at the prescribed level • A capped stage mean of 50% across the stage The credit requirement may include condoned and compensated credit where this has been given by the PAB.
Postgraduate Certificate	A student who is registered for the award of Postgraduate Certificate will be considered for the award on completion of: • Not less than 60 credits, with at least 45 credits at the prescribed level The credit requirement may not include either compensated and condoned credit.

Consideration upon notification/constructive knowledge of a disability

101. The PAB will be advised of cases where support was offered after the start of the course so that a sit may be considered for modules with impacted marks prior to when the support was offered. No marks can be set aside.

Award titles

102. A student who successfully completes all the requirements of a course that includes an integrated placement year, following any resit, will be awarded a degree with 'Professional/Industrial Placement Year', provided that the award criteria as stated above have been met. This will be recognised on the degree certificate.

Postgraduate Exit Awards

103. Students who fail to achieve the credit required for the award for which they are registered but who meet the relevant criteria for a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate may be considered in line with the award criteria above.
104. The mean mark should only be calculated from the taught modules contributing to the award. Credit achieved from a research-based dissertation/project cannot contribute to the credit requirements of a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate when awarded as an exit award.
105. Postgraduate exit awards are not classified. See [Approved Derogations to UG and PGT Progression and Award Regulations](#) for alternative exit award titles.

Non-accredited exit awards

106. A PAB has the discretion to grant an exit award where the standard criteria have been met.

Institutional Credit

107. Where insufficient credit has been accrued for a Postgraduate Certificate of Higher Education to be given, then institutional credit for any modules passed will be awarded.

Aegrotat Awards

108. An Aegrotat degree will be subject to the approval of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education and Students) following a recommendation from the PAB.

109. An Aegrotat degree does not provide eligibility for registration with a PSRB or denote suitability to practice.

Appeal against the decision of a PAB

110. A student can appeal against the decision of a PAB where the criteria for an appeal are met.

Transcript of results

111. Upon completion of/withdrawal from their studies, the student will receive a transcript. The transcript does not constitute a certificate or award.

Review / Contacts / References	
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