

# SECTION 19: AWARDS: POSTGRADUATE MASTER'S, POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA, POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE

Please note that this section relates to degrees awarded on the basis of postgraduate taught programmes and does not include Integrated Master's programmes. The awarding of Integrated Master's programmes is covered in Section 18.

Please see Section 16 for guidance which applies to all awards, including provisions for an Aegrotat award (in cases where a student is prevented by illness or personal circumstances from completing the assessment for an award), and procedures in the case of tuition fee debt. For information about extenuating circumstances procedures, please refer to section 8.

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## 19.1 CLASSIFICATIONS

Master's degrees and Postgraduate Diplomas may be awarded with the following classifications:

Distinction

Merit

Passed

In respect of Master's, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate, candidates who have failed to fulfil the relevant requirements for a result of Passed shall be stated to have Failed, but may be eligible for an alternative qualification.

An Aegrotat degree may be awarded to a candidate who is prevented by reason of illness or other incapacity from completing the assessment for a degree, in accordance with Ordinance C4(III). An Aegrotat degree is not classified. See section 16.6 for further information on an Aegrotat.

## 19.2 WEIGHTING

The awarding of a Postgraduate Master's degree shall be based on the full complement of credits specified in the programme specification, which shall be not less than 180 credits.

The awarding of a Postgraduate Diploma shall be based on not less than 120 credits.

The awarding of a Postgraduate Certificate shall be based on not less than 60 credits.

## 19.3 DEFINITIONS FOR AWARDING OF POSTGRADUATE MASTER'S DEGREES, POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA AND CERTIFICATE

The following definitions apply in the awarding method for Postgraduate Master's degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Postgraduate Certificates:

## **Weighted Average Mark**

All postgraduate taught programmes will use the same method for calculating the Weighted Average Mark, i.e. the average of a student's module marks weighted according to the number of credits.

Where it has been agreed that a programme includes a module assessable on a PASS/FAIL basis, the calculation shall exclude such modules.

Where it has been agreed at validation that a Master's, Diploma or Certificate programme be based on more than 180 credits, 120 credits or 60 credits respectively, the calculation shall be adjusted accordingly.

## **Dissertation**

A module comprising a substantial piece of independent work (which may include a project in scientific disciplines) which has been designated by the relevant Board of Studies and the School Board for Teaching and Learning (or previously Faculty Board for Teaching and Learning) as a 'dissertation' for the purposes of awarding. A student's programme should not normally include more than one module which has been designated as a 'dissertation'.

## **Absolute Weakness**

For Master's and PG Diploma programmes: A mark below 40 in modules totalling more than 30 credits or a mark below 50 in modules totalling more than 55 credits.

For PG Certificate programmes: A mark below 40 in modules totalling more than 10 credits.

## **Significant Weakness**

A mark below 40 in any modules agreed during scrutiny and validation as being of special significance to the programme.

## **Dominant Quality**

The class which best represents the profile; that is, the highest class which at least half of the marks, weighted according to their number of credits, fall either in or above.

Where it has been agreed that a programme includes a module assessable on a PASS/FAIL basis, the calculation of dominant quality shall exclude such modules.

Where it has been agreed at validation that a Master's, Diploma or Certificate programme be based on more than 180 credits, 120 credits or 60 credits respectively, the calculation shall be adjusted accordingly. Hence:

If the marks for at least half of the credits are in the range 70-100, the Dominant Quality is Distinction Standard.

If the Dominant Quality is not of Distinction Standard and the marks for at least half of the credits are in the range 60 and above, the Dominant Quality is Merit Standard.

If the Dominant Quality is not of at least Merit Standard and the marks for at least half of the credits are in the range 50 and above, the Dominant Quality is Good Standard.

If the Dominant Quality is not of at least Good Standard and the marks for at least half of the credits are in the range 40 and above, the Dominant Quality is Below Threshold Standard.

All programmes will use the same method of profiling to determine Dominant Quality:

Dominant Quality shall be based on a profile recording the total number of credits for modules marked in each category; for example, for a Master's programme a student's profile might be as follows:

Example:

Distinction marks	(at least 70)	for	80 credits
Merit marks	(60-69)	for	60 credits
Good marks	(50-59)	for	40 credits
Below Threshold Standard marks	(40-49)	for	0 credits
Fail marks	(<40)	for	0 credits

In this example, the Dominant Quality of the set of marks is Merit Standard.

### **Borderlines**

In respect of the overall weighted average, all postgraduate Master's programmes use the same ranges for determining candidates within a borderline, as follows:

Master	Boundary	Borderline BELOW
	Distinction	68.0 – 69.9
	Merit	58.0 – 59.9
	Pass	48.0 – 49.9

## **19.4 AWARDING METHOD FOR AWARDING OF POSTGRADUATE MASTER'S DEGREES, POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA AND CERTIFICATE: SEQUENCE**

The Senate has approved the following awarding method for postgraduate taught Master's degrees, which requires that the same criteria be applied in the same order for all such programmes:

Awarding is made by the Examiners exercising judgement of the category which best represents the candidate's achievement based on the overall level of performance (the weighted average of the marks), on the profile of marks overall, and on any specific restriction which may apply (for accreditation or other proper purposes), taking into account any relevant special circumstances. The Examiners' judgement will be guided by the following.

Candidates with Absolute and/or Significant Weakness should normally be Failed.

Otherwise, the Weighted Average Mark should be initially used to place the candidate in a category, subject to the following conventions.

Where a programme includes modules which are marked on a Pass/Fail basis, the Programme Specification will specify the standard which a candidate is required to achieve in the module in order to fulfil the requirements for the award of the degree.

A statement clarifying the conditions under which Examiners might properly exercise discretion to agree a classification at variance with the algorithm contained in the Assessment Handbook was agreed by the University Board for Teaching and Learning in February 2006, and is included in Section 16.4.

## 19.5 AWARDING METHOD FOR MASTER'S DEGREES: DETAILED PROCEDURE

- a) In order to be eligible for a Master's degree, a candidate must have completed 180 credits (of which not less than 150 shall normally be at level 7 or above) and to have fulfilled the conditions given below.

**b) Master's degrees:**

**(i) Awards**

The following conditions should be satisfied for the award of a Master's degree\*\*:

Where the conditions for a higher class have been met, the higher class should be awarded.

**Distinction**

[A Weighted Average Mark of 70 or more over 180 credits

AND

a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation

AND

no mark below 40.]

**OR**

[A Weighted Average Mark of 68 or more over 180 credits

AND

a mark of 70 or more in 90 credits^

AND

a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation

AND

no mark below 40.]

**Merit**

[A Weighted Average Mark of 60 or more over 180 credits

AND

a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation

AND

no mark below 40.]

**OR**

[A Weighted Average Mark of 58 or more over 180 credits

AND

a mark of 60 or more in 90 credits^

AND

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a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation

AND

no mark below 40.]

Passed

[A Weighted Average Mark of 50 or more over 180 credits

AND

a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation

AND

no Significant Weakness (i.e. no mark below 40 in modules agreed at validation to be of special significance to the programme)

AND

no Absolute Weakness (i.e. the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits).]

OR

[A Weighted Average Mark of 48 or more over 180 credits

AND

a mark of 50 or more in 90 credits<sup>^</sup>

AND

a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation

AND

no Significant Weakness (i.e. no mark below 40 in modules agreed at validation to be of special significance to the programme)

AND

no Absolute Weakness (i.e. the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits).]

**(ii) Failed**

A performance which fails to fulfil the criteria for the above classifications. A candidate who has failed may be eligible for a lesser award.

*\*\* Where it has been agreed at validation that a Master's programme does not include a dissertation, the above conventions omitting all references to the dissertation will apply. Where it has been agreed at validation that a Master's programme consists of modules worth a total of more than the minimum requirement of 180 credits, the Weighted Average Mark should be calculated over the agreed greater total of credits.*

*<sup>^</sup> Where the weighted average mark is calculated on a different number of credits from the standard 180, the number of credits in which this level of performance is required will be half the number of credits forming the weighted average.*

## 19.6 AWARDING METHOD FOR POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA: DETAILED PROCEDURE

- a) In order to be eligible for a Postgraduate Diploma, a candidate must have completed 120 credits (of which not less than 90 shall normally be at level 7 or above) and to have fulfilled the conditions given below.

### b) Postgraduate Diploma:

The following conditions should be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma:

Where the conditions for a higher class have been met, the higher class should be awarded.

#### Distinction

[A Weighted Average Mark of 70 or more over 120 credits#

AND

no mark below 40.]

OR

[A Weighted Average Mark of 68 or more over 120 credits#

AND

a mark of 70 or more in 60 credits^^

AND

no mark below 40.]

#### Merit

[A Weighted Average Mark of 60 or more over 120 credits#

AND

no mark below 40.]

OR

[A Weighted Average Mark of 58 or more over 120 credits#

AND

a mark of 60 or more in 60 credits^^

AND

no mark below 40.]

#### Passed

[A Weighted Average Mark of 50 or more over 120 credits#

AND

no Significant Weakness (i.e. no mark below 40 in modules agreed at validation to be of special significance to the programme)

AND

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no Absolute Weakness (i.e. the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits).]

OR

[A Weighted Average Mark of 48 or more over 120 credits#

AND

a mark of 50 or more in 60 credits^^

AND

no Significant Weakness (i.e. no mark below 40 in modules agreed at validation to be of special significance to the programme)

AND

no Absolute Weakness (i.e. the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 does not exceed 55 credits).]

#### Failed

A performance which fails to fulfil the criteria for the above classifications. A candidate who has failed may be eligible for a lesser award.

*# Where it has been agreed at validation that a programme consists of modules worth a total of more than the minimum requirement of 120 credits for PG Diploma or 60 credits for PG Certificate, the Weighted Average Mark should be calculated over the agreed greater total of credits.*

*^^ Where the weighted average mark is calculated on a different number of credits from the standard 120, the number of credits in which this level of performance is required will be half the number of credits forming the weighted average.*

## 19.7 AWARDING METHOD FOR POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE: DETAILED PROCEDURE

- a) In order to be eligible for a Postgraduate Certificate, a candidate must have completed 60 credits (of which not less than 40 shall normally be at level 7 or above) and to have fulfilled the conditions given below.

#### b) Postgraduate Certificate:

Passed and Failed categories only will be awarded for PG Certificates as follows:

##### (i) Awards

The following conditions should be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate:

Where the conditions for a higher class have been met, the higher class should be awarded.

#### Passed

[A Weighted Average Mark of 50 or more over 60 credits#

AND

no Significant Weakness (i.e. no mark below 40 in modules agreed at validation to be of special significance to the programme)



AND

no Absolute Weakness (i.e. the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 10 credits).]

OR

[A Weighted Average Mark of 48 or more over 60 credits#

AND

A mark of 50 or more in 30 credits^^^

AND

no Significant Weakness (i.e. no mark below 40 in modules agreed at validation to be of special significance to the programme)

AND

no Absolute Weakness (i.e. the total credit value summed for all modules marked below 40 does not exceed 10 credits).]

**(ii) Failed**

A performance which fails to fulfil the criteria for the above classifications.

*# Where it has been agreed at validation that a programme consists of modules worth a total of more than the minimum requirement of 120 credits for PG Diploma or 60 credits for PG Certificate, the Weighted Average Mark should be calculated over the agreed greater total of credits.*

*^^^ Where the weighted average mark is calculated on a different number of credits from the standard 60, the number of credits in which this level of performance is required will be half the number of credits forming the weighted average.*

## **19.8 SUPPLEMENTARY CONVENTIONS RELATING TO SPECIFIED PROGRAMMES**

School Boards of Teaching and Learning may recommend to the University Programmes Board in respect of specified programmes further provisions relating to designated modules, including provisions in respect of Absolute Significant Weakness and other requirements relating to the achievement of minimum marks. Such provisions must be stated in the Programme Specification and in the Programme Handbook. While it is intended that such supplementary conventions be kept to a minimum, it is recognized that programmes which bear professional accreditation (or the equivalent) may be subject to a number of supplementary conventions.

## **19.9 EXAMINERS' DISCRETION**

Examiners may recommend a higher classification than the guidelines imply, where they deem this to be appropriate. The grounds for such a recommendation must be recorded in the Programme Examiners' Meeting Minutes. In order to ensure transparency and support consistency, all such recommendations must be approved by the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean before being reported to the relevant University Awarding Board.

A statement clarifying the conditions under which Examiners might properly exercise discretion to agree a classification at variance with the algorithm contained in the Assessment Handbook is included in Section 16.4.

## 19.10 SUBMISSION OF MASTER'S WORK TOWARDS ANOTHER DEGREE

A candidate who has qualified for a Master's degree on the basis of a taught postgraduate programme shall not *ipso facto* be admitted to the degree if they are permitted to submit work previously examined for that degree in an examination for another Master's degree (by examination or by thesis) or for the degree of PhD. A candidate shall, however, have the right to claim admission to that degree if they do not successfully complete the subsequent programme.

### Document control

Version	Section	Keeper	Reviewed	Approving authority	Approval date	Start date	Next review
1.0	CQSD	KHSS	3 years	UBTLSE			
1.1	CQSD	KHSS	3 years	UBTLSE	03/11/21	19/04/22	01/09/2024
1.2	CQSD	KHSS	3 years	UBTLSE	06/06/23	25/09/2023	01/09/2024