

**MANUAL OF ACADEMIC REGULATIONS
AND PROCEDURES 2018-19**

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

(APPLICABLE FROM OCTOBER 2018)

Academic Standards and Quality

MARP 2018-19

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MARP 2018-19
POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

PT 1 POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT AWARDS

PT 1.1 The University currently offers the following postgraduate taught awards:

Postgraduate taught awards	Level	FTE period of study (normal)	Normal total credit value	Normal minimum credit at level of award
Masters degree: LLM; MA; MBA; MMus; MRes ¹ ; MSc	7	1 year	180	150
Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)	7	Up to 1 year	120	90
Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)	7	Up to 1 year	60	40
Postgraduate Certificate of Achievement (PGCertA)	7	Under 1 year	20	20
Graduate Diploma ²	6	1 year	120	120

PT 2 STRUCTURE OF MASTERS DEGREE PROGRAMMES

PT 2.1 Masters degrees, with the exclusion of the Integrated Masters degree, comprise learning at level 7, normally with 180 credits of assessment of which a substantial portion represents a dissertation.

PT 3 CRITERIA FOR AWARDS

PT 3.1 The pass mark for taught Masters degrees, postgraduate diplomas and postgraduate certificates shall be 50%, with credit for a module being awarded when the overall mark for the module is 50% or greater. Any undergraduate module which contributes to the postgraduate programme (see below) is marked according to the undergraduate marking scale but postgraduate students taking the module are required to obtain a mark of at least 50% to pass the module. The mark is included in the normal way within the profile of marks contributing to the average mark for the postgraduate programme.

PT 3.2 To qualify for an award, candidates should pass all the assessments required by their programme and be awarded credits, or have assessments condoned, as follows:

¹ The University categorises the MRes (Master of Research) as a postgraduate research degree award; however, such programmes are governed by the assessment regulations for postgraduate taught programmes for the purposes of assessment and classification and, for these purposes, the MRes is included within these regulations.

² Although the Graduate Diploma is based on undergraduate material, it is taken usually by those who are already graduates in another discipline. Thus it is 'postgraduate' in time, but not in level.

- (a) for a taught Masters degree, a total of at least 180 credits, with no more than 30 credits having been defined as being undergraduate in level;
- (b) for a Postgraduate Diploma, a total of at least 120 credits, with no more than 30 credits having been defined as being undergraduate in level;
- (c) for a Postgraduate Certificate, a total of at least 60 credits, with no more than 20 credits having been defined as being undergraduate in level.

PT 4 PROGRESSION

PT 4.1 Requirements for progression from one stage (or element) of a postgraduate taught programme to the next (for example taught module stage to dissertation/project/placement) should be specified at the time the programme is approved and communicated to all students when they first enrol on the programme.

PT 5 CLASSIFICATION OF AWARDS

PT 5.1 Once students have attained sufficient credit, taking full countenance to exceptional circumstances as reported from the [Exceptional Circumstances Committee](#), reassessment, and condonation opportunities as detailed below, they will be considered for awards of the University.

PT 5.2 Classifiable postgraduate taught awards are as follows:

- (a) Masters degrees;
- (b) Postgraduate Diploma – where this is the target award of the candidate under consideration;
- (c) Postgraduate Certificate – where this is the target award of the candidate under consideration.

The MRes is also a classifiable award.

PT 5.3 Where awards are classified an overall average for the programme should be computed in accordance with the approved credit weightings for each module. This average should be expressed to one decimal place and be used to determine the class of degree to be awarded in accordance with the class boundaries as defined below. In respect of a redeemed failed module (capped at 50%), the resit module score will be used as part of the computation of the overall mean unless the resit module score is lower than the original, in which case the original score will be used.

PT 5.4 There will be three classes of awards: distinction, merit and pass. Where the overall average, calculated to one decimal place, falls within one of the following ranges, the examination boards will recommend the award stated:

70.0%+	distinction
60.0-69.9%	merit
50.0-59.9%	pass
Below 50.0%	fail

PT 5.5 Merit and distinction classifications are not awarded in programmes where all assessment is wholly collaborative, involving peer assessment in each assignment.

PT 5.6 Where the overall average falls within two percent points of the range (68%, 58% or 48% respectively) or in cases where half or more of the credits are in the class above the mean the examination boards will have discretion, on the basis of previously approved and published criteria, to decide which of the alternative awards to recommend. In exercising such discretion the examination boards will take account of a variety of factors which may include the following:

- (a) dissertation;
- (b) core modules;
- (c) optional modules;
- (d) placements/study abroad;
- (e) elements of reassessment/condonation.

Departments must propose such criteria to the faculty teaching committee for approval and include the approved criteria in the department's student information published at the start of the academic year.

PT 5.7 Candidates for a taught Masters degree who fail to meet the requirements for the award of such a degree having exhausted all reassessment opportunities or who withdraw from the programme will be awarded either a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate, provided that:

- (a) such an award has been defined in the programme regulations; and
- (b) the student has been awarded sufficient credit for these lower awards as defined above.

PT 5.8 Candidates for a Postgraduate Diploma who fail to meet the requirements for such an award having exhausted all reassessment opportunities or who withdraw from the programme will be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate, provided that:

- (a) such an award has been defined in the programme regulations; and
- (b) the student has been awarded sufficient credit for these lower awards as defined above.

PT 5.9 Academic judgement does not constitute ground for appeal; however, students who wish to challenge the process may do so under the procedures for [Academic Appeals](#).

PT 6 REASSESSMENT

PT 6.1 A student who fails any module at any point in the degree programme will have one opportunity for reassessment for that module within the same academic year. If the mark for the module is below 40% then reassessment is compulsory; otherwise it is optional. Where for administrative or logistical reasons it is not possible for a student to complete the reassessment requirements to the published time (for example with a resubmitted dissertation) and an alternative form of assessment cannot be devised, the examination boards may propose an alternative date for reassessment. Such alternative reassessment arrangements will not give advantage or disadvantage compared with the original form of assessment.

PT 6.2 The precise form of reassessment is for the department to decide, but the following principles should be borne in mind:

- (a) the principal purpose of reassessment is to re-examine the learning objectives which have been failed at the first attempt;
- (b) students who have failed all elements of assessment at the first attempt should not be advantaged over those who have failed only a part of the assessment.

PT 6.3 If the module percentage mark after reassessment is an improvement on the original mark, the new percentage mark will count subject to a cap of 50%; otherwise the original percentage mark will stand. The resulting percentage mark will count towards the overall average.

PT 6.4 Where reassessment is prohibited for reasons of professional accreditation this will be clearly stated in the assessment guidelines provided to students and alternative awards and other available options identified.

PT 6.5 Students may not seek reassessment to improve a passing grade unless required for professional accreditation and allowed under specific accreditation arrangements.

PT 6.6 The overall profile will only then be considered for classification when all the results of reassessment are available.

PT 7 CONDONATION

PT 7.1 Where a student, after all opportunities for reassessment, has failed a module, the exam board should, subject to the learning outcomes for the programme being met, normally condone credit whereby said credit will be available as an element of either progression or final classification requirements of the award, subject to the maximum number of condonable credits as laid down in PT 7.2. Condonation may take place whether or not the student has taken advantage of the opportunity for reassessment. For the purposes of averaging, the mark obtained in any condoned module stands.

PT 7.2 When all the results of all reassessments relating to postgraduate taught modules of 15 credits or more in size are available the overall profile will be reviewed by the relevant exam board. For Masters programmes, up to a maximum of 45 credits should normally be condoned where the mark after all opportunities for reassessment is at least 40% (30 credits for Postgraduate Diplomas and 20 credits for Postgraduate Certificates). Where a module has a credit value of less than 15, these can be combined with other smaller values to create an assessment unit to a maximum value of 20 credits and therefore combined for condonation. However, such assessment units must be agreed and published in advance and not simply created for the purpose of condonation.

PT 7.3 The number of credits available for condonation within a Masters degree programme may be reduced to 30 if this is approved by the faculty teaching committee. It is also permissible to declare any individual module uncondonable if this is properly approved. All such decisions must be clearly communicated to all students on the programme.

PT 7.4 The phrase "should normally" in PT 7.1 and PT 7.2 above means that condonation, where allowable and subject to the learning outcomes for the programme being met, must be granted unless the examiners believe that there is good reason not to do so. Any such reason must be described and justified in the examination board minutes. The

final decision will be taken by the University Dean for Academic Quality acting on behalf of Senate.

PT 8 INCOMPLETE ASSESSMENT AND EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- PT 8.1 For the purposes of these regulations 'exceptional circumstances' will mean properly evidenced and approved claims from students that demonstrate good cause as to why their performance and achievements have been adversely affected by means which have not been fully addressed through extension and other available assessment procedures.
- PT 8.2 For the purposes of these regulations 'good cause' will mean illness or other relevant personal circumstances affecting a student and resulting in either the student's failure to attend an examination, or submit coursework at or by the due time, or otherwise satisfy the requirements of the scheme of assessment appropriate to his or her programme of studies; or, the student's performance in examination or other instrument of assessment being manifestly prejudiced.
- PT 8.3 A chronic medical condition, for which due allowance has already been made, will not itself be considered a good cause although a short-term exacerbation of such a condition might be so judged.
- PT 8.4 'Evidence' will mean a report descriptive of the medical condition or other adverse personal circumstances which are advanced by the student for consideration as amounting to good cause. Such a report should include a supporting statement from an appropriate person. Where the report refers to a medical condition of more than five days duration the report must be completed by an appropriate medical practitioner who would be requested to comment on how the medical condition concerned would be likely (if this were the case) to have affected the student's ability to prepare for or carry out the assessments in question.
- PT 8.5 Where an incomplete assessment may be the result of good cause, it will be the responsibility of the student concerned to make the circumstances known to their department or equivalent body and to provide appropriate evidence. Notification later than forty-eight hours after the examination, or after the date at which submission of the work for assessment was due, will not normally be taken into account unless circumstances have prevented the student from notifying the department within this time.
- PT 8.6 All programmes will have an Exceptional Circumstances Committee whose primary responsibility it is to consider claims of good cause for the modules they administer. Any such claims would be subject to confirmation by the examination boards at a later date. The Exceptional Circumstances Committee would be required to meet at least once prior to the final examination boards, but might usefully meet to consider claims of good cause on a more frequent basis. The Exceptional Circumstances Committee will produce minutes of its meetings to be submitted to the appropriate examination body.
- PT 8.7 In considering claims of good cause:
- (a) the evidence provided by the student claiming good cause, and any relevant and available material submitted by him or her for assessment will be scrutinised;

- (b) fairness to the individual student claiming good cause must be balanced with fairness to other students and the integrity of the assessment as a whole;
- (c) in the event of the student having failed to attend an examination or examinations, or having failed to submit course material or other work for assessment at or by the due time, it will be determined whether the failure to attend or submit has been justified by good cause; and
- (d) in the event of the student having submitted work for assessment by examination or otherwise, it will be determined whether such work has been manifestly prejudiced by good cause. If such prejudice is established the work affected will normally be deemed not to have been submitted.

PT 8.8 Where it is determined that the evidence presented does not support the student's claim that s/he was prevented by good cause from attending an examination or from submitting work for assessment, the student will be awarded a percentage score of zero for the assessment or assessments in question. Where work is submitted but the student makes a claim that it has been affected by good cause (or a late penalty is applied), and the evidence presented does not support the student's claim then his or her work will be assessed (or penalised) as though no claim of good cause had been received and the student's grade for the module will be calculated accordingly.

PT 8.9 In the event of incomplete assessment arising from good cause being established the student will normally be expected to complete his or her assessment by attending the examination at a subsequent session, or submitting outstanding work for assessment, if an opportunity to do so occurs within his or her period of study. In considering whether this requirement should apply, the desirability of the student's assessment being conducted in full should be balanced with the practical considerations and financial costs to the student and the University of providing a later completion date. Consideration should also be given to the student's other assessment commitments to ensure that he or she is not unreasonably burdened. In order to permit such completion:

- (a) a special sitting of an examination may be arranged, or the student will be required to attend for examination at a scheduled session; and/or
- (b) a date for completion of non-examination assessment will be set; as appropriate in the circumstances. In any such event, that sitting or submission will be regarded as the student's first attempt if the examination or assessment missed would itself have been his or her first attempt.

PT 8.10 Where it is determined that the evidence presented supports the student's claim that he or she was prevented by good cause from completing work for assessment on or by the due time, and where no means of substituting an alternative assessment may be found, the following regulations will apply.

- (a) The extent to which the student's assessment has been completed will be determined as a percentage, taking into account the relative weights attributed to the components of a complete assessment as published in the relevant approved assessment scheme.
- (b) The examination boards will make an overall judgement of the student's work submitted for assessment, using as far as possible the standards and criteria applied in respect of the work of other students.

- (c) At module level where the student has:
 - (i) completed 33% or more of the total summative assessment required the examination boards can recommend an overall module result using the full grading table on the basis of work completed so long as the work completed is deemed to demonstrate attainment against substantial elements of the module's learning outcomes;
 - (ii) completed less than 33% of the work required for assessment he or she will be regarded as not having completed sufficient assessment to be awarded a grade in the module.

- (d) At programme level where the student has:
 - (i) completed 75% or more of the total work required for programme assessment, the examination boards will recommend an award or other outcome on the basis of the work completed;
 - (ii) completed less than 75% of the work required for assessment he or she will be regarded as not having completed sufficient assessment to be awarded a degree.

PT 8.11 Further guidance on the management and operation of Exceptional Circumstances Committees can be found in [the General Regulations for Assessment and Award](#).

PT 9 CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION OF RESULTS

PT 9.1 Senate has ultimate authority to determine all results of assessment leading to University of Lancaster credit and awards. For Masters degrees it delegates its authority to an officer of the University, who in turn delegates operational authority to individual examination boards.

PT 9.2 The officer with delegated authority from Senate provides:

- (a) formal confirmation (or not) of due process regarding the decisions from Boards of Examiners for the award to individual students of a named degree (i.e. qualification and subject) of a particular class;
- (b) formal approval of due process regarding the recommendations from Boards of Examiners that students be awarded no degree with or without a resit opportunity (i.e. fails); and
- (c) formal review of External Examiner reports of all postgraduate taught provision to ensure consistency across the University.

PT 9.3 For each degree programme approved by the University there will be an exam board comprising external and internal examiners which will be responsible for the assurance of standards through the exercise of their academic judgement both directly in the assessment of students' work and indirectly in the design of specific forms of assessment. The constitution and terms of reference for examination boards within the constituent elements of the University are set out in the section on examination boards in [the General Regulations for Assessment and Award](#).

PT 9.4 The exam board will receive decisions from the Exceptional Circumstances Committee. Examination boards cannot, of themselves, reconsider or change decisions of the

Exceptional Circumstances Committee. Examination boards may challenge decisions of Exceptional Circumstances Committees by referring final decisions to the Committee of Senate, or its delegated officer.

- PT 9.5 Examination boards will consider the results of examinations and final marks and make recommendations to the officer with delegated authority from Senate as to the award of degrees (and the classification of degrees) within the approved degree programme classification scheme.
- PT 9.6 Examination boards will agree condonation of assessment against understood and agreed criteria, details of which are available elsewhere.
- PT 9.7 The business of the examination boards will be minuted and the minutes will include a record of the External Examiner's adjudications, comments and recommendations, as well as particular decisions made by the board. The minutes will also record the decisions of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee for each candidate considered by that committee. The minutes must include a list of attendees (together with their status as external or internal examiners or assessor). This record of the proceedings of the board will be restricted and made available only to: the participating examiners and assessors, the Vice-Chancellor and other officers of the University as appropriate; the officer with delegated authority from Senate and appropriate Academic Appeal and Review Panels as defined in the chapter on [Academic Appeals](#). Where the exam board has exercised its discretion in a particular case, as provided by these Regulations, the officer with delegated authority from Senate will normally uphold its decision providing it had the support of the majority of the External Examiners present at that exam board.

PT 10 PUBLISHED INFORMATION

- PT 10.1 The determination of results and the classification of University degrees are subject always to ratification by the Senate and will be regarded as provisional until ratified, normally through the officer with delegated authority from Senate.
- PT 10.2 Immediately after the meetings of the relevant examination boards, departments or equivalent may notify students of their provisional degree results.
- PT 10.3 Within forty days of the ratification of degree results, students will receive a transcript of their results together with a diploma supplement, both of which will conform in scope and layout to principles agreed by Senate.

PT 11 EXCLUSION

- PT 11.1 Students who fail to meet the final award criteria and who have exhausted all reassessment opportunities will be excluded from the University. Students are entitled to appeal against exclusion under the University's [Academic Appeals](#) procedures.

PT 12 POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

- PT 12.1 The University shall award a Postgraduate Certificate of Achievement for students who have obtained between 20 and 50 credits at M level on a named award.

- PT 12.2 Each named award shall be in the form of a proposal to the appropriate teaching committee(s) and shall consist of modules within a specific area of study that together make up a coherent programme. The elements that make up the award and their assessment, and the timescale for their achievement, shall be specified in the proposal.
- PT 12.3 The holder of a Certificate of Achievement may progress to a further M level award, including diploma and taught Masters courses, and shall receive credit for some or all of the credits received within the Certificate, provided that the holder shall surrender the Certificate of Achievement on successful completion of the studies specified for the further qualification. The award may not be used as a substitute for partial success in any other programme.
- PT 12.4 Each named award shall have a named director of studies who will admit students by means of the standard postgraduate admissions procedures.
- PT 12.5 Students who are registered for a programme leading to a named Certificate of Achievement shall have access to the same procedures governing postgraduate study as all other students; except that they may not attend a degree ceremony.
- PT 12.6 The fee payable will normally be a pro rata proportion of the standard postgraduate Masters fee, calculated by reference to the credit value of the particular award.

APPENDICES TO THE POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

APPENDIX 1: PERCENTAGE TABLE

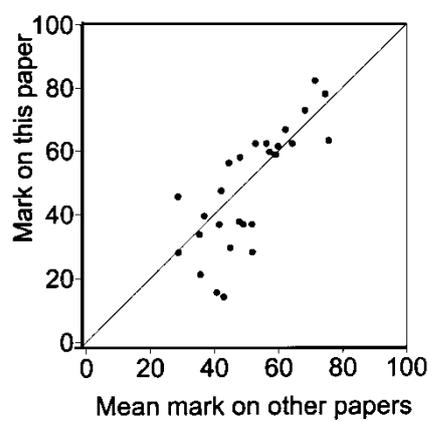
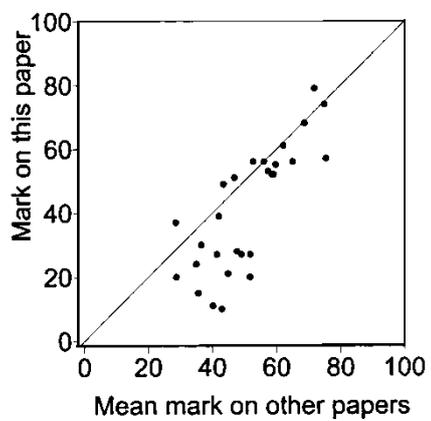
Result	Broad Descriptor	Percentage range	Primary verbal descriptors for attainment of Intended Learning Outcomes	Class
Pass	Excellent	70-100	Exemplary range and depth of attainment of intended learning outcomes, secured by discriminating command of a comprehensive range of relevant materials and analyses, and by deployment of considered judgement relating to key issues, concepts and procedures	Distinction
Pass	Good	60-69	Conclusive attainment of virtually all intended learning outcomes, clearly grounded on a close familiarity with a wide range of supporting evidence, constructively utilised to reveal appreciable depth of understanding	Merit
Pass	Satisfactory	50-59	Clear attainment of most of the intended learning outcomes, some more securely grasped than others, resting on a circumscribed range of evidence and displaying a variable depth of understanding	Pass
Fail	Marginal fail	40-49	Attainment deficient in respect of specific intended learning outcomes, with mixed evidence as to the depth of knowledge and weak deployment of arguments or deficient manipulations	Fail
Fail	Fail	30-39	Attainment of intended learning outcomes appreciably deficient in critical respects, lacking secure basis in relevant factual and analytical dimensions	
Fail	Poor fail	20-29	Attainment of intended learning outcomes appreciably deficient in respect of nearly all intended learning outcomes, with irrelevant use of materials and incomplete and flawed explanation	

Other transcript indicators			
Flag	Broad Descriptor	Definition	Aggregation Score
M	Malpractice	Failure to comply, in the absence of good cause, with the published requirements of the course or programme; and/or a serious breach of regulations	0M
N	Non-submission	Failure to submit assignment for assessment	0N
P	Penalty	Failure to submit within regulation requirements (late submission, improper format, etc.)	varies
R	Resit	Attainment of a passing grade through reassessment processes	50R
DP	Decision Pending	The grade is subject to investigation	

APPENDIX 2: GUIDANCE FOR SCALING OF MARKS

1. All assessments and marking schemes should be created with the aim of ensuring that the resulting grades/marks give a good indication of the ability and application of the students. However, it is inevitable that on occasion this will not work as planned.
2. Reasons may include a misprinted examination paper, the interruption of an examination or, in a science laboratory, an instrumental malfunction not obvious at the time of the experiment; or it may simply be that examiners agree, using their academic judgment and with the benefit of hindsight, that an assessment, or part of an assessment, proved to be significantly harder or easier than expected.
3. In such cases it is appropriate to consider whether the marks should be scaled. Scaling may be of the overall mark for the module or of any assessment therein.
4. Although an unusual distribution of grades/marks is not of itself a sufficient reason for scaling to be applied, it may be an indication that something has gone wrong. For this reason, if the overall mean aggregation score for any module lies outside the range 14.5-17.5 (or 58% to 68% for percentage marks) then examiners must consider whether or not there is a case for the marks to be scaled. **Note:** For **International and Regional Teaching Partnership provision** the range outside which scaling must be considered is 13.5-17.0 (or 55% to 66.7%)
5. Where the possibility of scaling is being discussed, the precise method should also be discussed and should reflect both the nature of the assessment and the size of the cohort. Both the reason for scaling and the method used must be justified within the minutes of the examining body. If scaling is discussed and not used, the reason for not scaling must be recorded in the minutes. In all cases both the original and the scaled marks must be permanently recorded.
6. Where scaling is applied for the same module for at least part of its assessment on more than one occasion, the assessment practices of the module must be reviewed as appropriate.
7. Scaling may take any form as long as it preserves the ordering of students' marks; thus, for example, if Student A has a higher unscaled mark than Student B, then Student A's scaled mark must not be lower than that of Student B. Common examples of scaling methods are given below, but other methods are possible.
 - (a) For work marked in letter grades, all grades may be raised or lowered by a constant amount.
 - (b) For work marked in percentages, every mark may be multiplied by a constant factor, or have a constant value added to or subtracted from it, or a combination of the two.
 - (c) As in (a) or (b) above, except that where marks are being reduced no pass is turned into a fail (thus, for example, where marks are in general being reduced by 10%, for an undergraduate module or assessment, all unscaled marks between 40% and 49% become scaled marks of 40%), or no condonable mark is turned into an uncondonable mark.

- (d) For work marked in percentages, piecewise linear interpolation may be used, where each mark is plotted for each student against his or her average mark on other assessments, as in the graphs below.



APPENDIX 3: ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

1. Certain awards within Lancaster University carry alongside the academic award professional accreditation from the Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) associated with the academic discipline. In certain cases these PSRBs have the authority to set requirements above and beyond those required by Lancaster's regulations. These additional requirements are set out below.

MA/PGDip Social Work

2. Practice elements

H level assessments (i.e. Practice Portfolios) are marked pass or fail. Students failing the H level elements, but passing the M level elements will be eligible for the award of the MA or PGDip Applied Social Studies.

3. Examinations which assess the students' knowledge of the Law

Students must obtain a pass mark in examinations in the areas of Social Work with Children & Families, Mental Distress & Health and Social Work in Adult Social Care. In order to meet this examination requirement, students are eligible to undertake up to two resits of the examination and the module mark will be capped at either 50% or the first attempt module mark if higher than 50%.

4. Condonation

There is no condonation of the direct practice element of the placement modules or of Social Work with Children & Families, Mental Distress & Health and Social Work in Adult Social Care where the examination is failed.

Where condonation is being considered for a Social Work student, a special re-sit assessment panel made up of all markers will consider if the student has satisfactorily met the Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Proficiency and The College of Social Work's Professional Capabilities Framework in other work. If a student has not done so they may not be condoned for a degree in Social Work. Students may have failed units condoned for a degree in Applied Social Studies where the University criteria for condonation are met.

5. Fitness to practice

Examination boards will be held at four points in the programme:

- (a) the end of year 1;
- (b) the end of the first placement;
- (c) the end of the second placement; and
- (d) the end of the final year.

Failure at any of these four stages may be the subject of an appeal to a panel on fitness to practice, consisting of members of the University, a service user and an agency programme partner.

6. Progression requirements between years one and two

In order to progress between years one and two of the degree, the student cannot carry any more than 30 credits or two modules with condonable failed marks.