

Undergraduate Regulations 2019-20

THE AWARD OF CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS, FOUNDATION DEGREES, BACHELOR'S DEGREES AND INTEGRATED MASTERS DEGREES

2019 - 2020

CONTENTS

Regulations

- A. Admissions Regulations
- B. Assessment Regulations

Appendices

- 1. List of Awards

Other Relevant Documentation

See the Quality Assurance Handbook for related information including:

- Assessment Policy
<https://my.sunderland.ac.uk/download/attachments/105484817/Assessment%20Policy%20v8.pdf?version=3&modificationDate=1531237357000&api=v2>
- Generic Assessment Criteria
<https://my.sunderland.ac.uk/download/attachments/105484817/Generic%20Assessment%20Criteria%20v5.pdf?version=2&modificationDate=1497861202000&api=v2>
- Accreditation of Prior Learning
<https://my.sunderland.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=105484841>
- Appeals Procedure
<https://my.sunderland.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=105484836>
- Procedures for Extenuating Circumstances
<https://my.sunderland.ac.uk/display/AQH/Extenuating+Circumstances>
- Student Conduct and Discipline
<https://my.sunderland.ac.uk/download/attachments/105484836/Student%20Disciplinary%20Regulations%20v4.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1505382427000&api=v2>
- Academic Integrity and Misconduct
<https://my.sunderland.ac.uk/display/AQH/Academic+Integrity+and+Misconduct>

and links to external documentation including:

- Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf?sfvrsn=170af781_14
- Northern Ireland Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (NICATS) Level Descriptors
<https://my.sunderland.ac.uk/download/attachments/105582064/NICATS%20Extract.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1499847085000&api=v2>
- Placement Regulations For Taught Programmes
<https://my.sunderland.ac.uk/download/attachments/105484851/Placement%20Regulations%20for%20Taught%20Programmes%20v4.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1499770169000&api=v2>

A. ADMISSIONS REGULATIONS

1. REGULATIONS FOR THE ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

The University accepts all nationally recognised advanced qualifications for entry to higher education, and gives equal consideration to academic and vocational qualifications for all programmes of study. The University may also take into consideration skills and expertise gained from work experience or vocational training.

The specific entry criteria for each programme, including University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) tariff points, will be published annually in the University of Sunderland prospectus, web pages and UCAS entry profiles.

Where an applicant's first language is not English they will be required to demonstrate evidence of achievement of 6 overall in the International English Language Testing Scheme (IELTS) with all element scores at 5.5 or higher. An alternative approved Secure English Language Test (SELT) and the University's recognised English language qualifications/tests (as approved by Academic Board) will also be accepted if the applicant's element scores are equivalent to those required for IELTS.

1.1.1. Applicants to degree programmes will be expected to have:

- Three passes at GCSE grade C or above (including Mathematics & English). For some programmes discretion may be available to waive the requirement for a Maths GCSE in circumstances set out in the University criteria for that discretion, or a minimum of level 2 Key/Basic Skills in Literacy, Application of Number/ Numeracy and Information Technology will also be considered

and

- A minimum of 2 x 6 unit awards or 1x12 unit award or equivalent (Achievement at a lower level will be subsumed into the higher level, i.e., AS points will be subsumed into the A level points for the same subject and is not acceptable for entry alone)
- For some programmes 3 unit awards may be used to make up extra points
- Successful completion of a recognised Level 3 or Access Programme
- The full International, European and Welsh Baccalaureate
- Other qualifications as deemed acceptable by the University

1.1.2. Applicants to HND programmes will be expected to have: -

- Three passes at GCSE grade C (including Mathematics & English) or above or a minimum of level 2 Key/Basic Skills in Literacy, Application of Number/ Numeracy and Information Technology will also be considered. For some programmes discretion may be available to waive the requirement for a Maths GCSE in circumstances set out in the University criteria for that discretion.

and

- A minimum of 1X 6 Unit award or equivalent
- For some programmes 3 Unit awards may be used to make up extra points
- Successful completion of a recognised Level 3 or Access Programme
- The full international or European Baccalaureate
- Other qualifications as deemed acceptable by the University

1.1.3. Applicants to Foundation Degrees

- Three passes at GCSE grade C (including Mathematics & English) or above or a minimum of level 2 Key/Basic Skills in Literacy, Application of Number/ Numeracy and Information Technology will also be considered. For some programmes discretion may be available to waive the requirement for a Maths GCSE in circumstances set out in the University criteria for that discretion.

and

- A minimum of 1x 6 Unit award including A levels or vocational equivalents e.g. AVCEs/ GNVQs
- NVQ level 3
- Applicants without formal qualifications may qualify for entry through relevant work based experience

1.1.4. Applicants to Integrated Foundation Programmes (Level 3)

- The Integrated Foundation Programme is intended for those students who may not have the academic qualifications to enter a degree programme but may have relevant life experience or vocational training and who, after interview with the appropriate admissions tutor, display a likelihood of success.
- Requirements are passes at GCSE grade C in Mathematics & English or above or a minimum of level 2 Key/Basic Skills in Literacy, Application of Number/ Numeracy and Information Technology will also be considered. For some programmes discretion may be available to waive the requirement for a Maths or English GCSE in circumstances set out in the University criteria for that discretion.

1.1.5. Applicants to EDEXCEL Art & Design Foundation

- Applicants will be expected to have passed a minimum of 1x 6 unit award or equivalent in an appropriate art based subject and present a visual portfolio of work at interview.

1.1.6. Applicants for Direct Entry to Stage 2/3

- Direct entry to Stage 2/3 of a programme may be appropriate depending on prior qualification or experience and with the agreement of the relevant Programme Leader and Admissions Tutor.

1.2 Entry with advanced standing

1.2.1 Students may be permitted to enter with advanced standing by Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or through an approved articulation or progression route. Such prior learning may be certificated or experiential or a combination of both. In such cases students are awarded credit for experience gained elsewhere. The approved processes by which entry with advanced standing may be permitted are described in the Academic Quality Handbook.

1.2.2 Advanced standing may be given for credits within one Stage of a programme or for a whole Stage or for credits across more than one Stage. However, students may not receive advanced standing for more than two-thirds of the credits for his/her target award. Where the target award is an Integrated Master's Degree, students may not receive advanced standing for more than one-half of the credits for the award, and all credits for Stage 3 (Level 6) and Stage 4 (Level 7) of the award must be studied at the University of Sunderland.

- 1.2.3 The limit of two-thirds of the credits for the target award does not apply if a student is seeking to convert a Sunderland Ordinary degree to an Honours degree - see regulation 6.5.2 below.
- 1.2.4 If a student has already gained a named target award at the same level as, or a higher level than, the target award towards which he/she is seeking entry with advanced standing, he/she may not use this to gain credit. However, if a student has gained an exit or interim award towards the target award, he/she may use that towards a target award at a higher level. Similarly, if a student has gained individual credits without gaining a named award, he/she may use those to seek advanced standing towards a target award at any level.
- 1.2.5 Credits gained by advanced standing are not given a mark or grade, and may not be used in the calculation of a degree classification or similar summative grade such as a distinction - see regulation 6.5.1.

B. ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These regulations provide a regulatory framework for all the University's undergraduate programmes. Separate regulations exist for postgraduate programmes. Exceptions to these regulations, particularly to meet Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements, must be approved by, or on behalf of, Academic Board and recorded as programme-specific regulations.
- 1.2 This edition of the regulations is applicable to all undergraduate programmes for students.
- 1.3 Some students are subject to national regulations in respect of visas and related matters which over-ride these regulations.

2 STRUCTURE AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 Credit Framework

- 2.1.1 All programmes consist of modules, each of which has its own learning outcomes and is set at an academic level consistent with those outcomes. Each module is given a credit rating which indicates the amount of learning time which the typical student is expected to spend to achieve the learning outcomes. Learning time includes both contact time and private study. The typical student is expected to take 100 hours of learning time to achieve the learning required for each 10 credits.
- 2.1.2 Credit is awarded for achievement of the specified learning outcomes of the module. Credit is accumulated sequentially, by level. No additional credit can be awarded for achievement above the threshold level although such achievement is recognised through the award of marks.
- 2.1.3 The following definitions are assumed within the University regulations.
 - (a) **Programme:** a programme is a complete study route with its own aims and learning outcomes consisting of combinations of modules and leading to a specific named academic award. Programmes can be based on a single subject, or be multidisciplinary or be a combination of two or three subjects (as in the Combined Studies Programme) or be customised to individual students' requirements.
 - (b) **Academic Award:** an academic award is given for the successful completion of a designated programme at the appropriate level(s), with a specific title. The standards of awards are aligned with the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Awards available are listed in Appendix 1.
 - (c) **Credit:** a measure of the volume of student learning time required to achieve defined learning outcomes at a given level. A full-time undergraduate workload is 120 credits per year representing 1200 hours of notional learning time.
 - (d) **Credit rating:** the process of assigning to a module a number of credits at a specific level, and the result of that process.
 - (e) **Notional learning time:** the length of learning time which it is estimated will be taken on average by a typical student to achieve a given volume of credit.

- (f) **Level:** an indicator of challenge, complexity, depth of study and learner autonomy. All modules are attributed to an academic level. Levels 3-8 are the equivalent of Foundation Year (level 3), HE Stages 1-3 (undergraduate, levels 4-6), HE4 (Masters, level 7) and HE5 (Doctoral, level 8).
- (g) **Stage:** an indication of the structure of a programme such that each Stage equates to one year of full-time study irrespective of the Level(s) of the modules taken within that Stage. A typical Bachelor's degree with Honours has three Stages.
- (h) **Year:** an indication of the progress of study of a student defined by the number of years (usually academic years) for which he/she has been registered for a programme. This is irrespective of the Stage of study and of the Level(s) of the modules involved.
- (i) **Learning outcomes:** statements of what the successful learner will know, understand and/or be able to do.
- (j) **Assessment criteria:** descriptions of the standards required to achieve a particular mark or set of marks in assessed activities in a given subject area and at a specified level. The University's generic criteria define a basis for the academic standards expected. Subject-specific criteria should be aligned to the generic criteria.
- (k) **Element of assessment:** an agreed assessment activity such as an examination or a piece of coursework, defined in the module outline and given a weighting to indicate the contribution of the mark for that work to the assessment of the module as a whole. Where several pieces of work (e.g. several laboratory reports) make up an element of assessment the marks for all the pieces of work must be aggregated and a single mark returned for the element of assessment. If students are required to pass an element of assessment it does not follow that they are required to pass each piece of work within the element.
- (l) **Programme-specific regulations:** regulations which define the modules to be taken within the programme and any particular requirements in relation to assessment and progression, including compensation. Where these require a variation from the university regulations this must be approved by, or on behalf of, Academic Board. They should be communicated to students in the programme and/or module handbook(s) as appropriate.

2.2 **Modules**

2.2.1 Modules are discrete units of assessed learning with coherent aims and learning outcomes. They may include projects, professional practice, and work-based study.

2.2.2 A standard module:

- is equivalent to one-sixth of a full-time student's annual learning activity;
- is worth 20 credits;

- represents at least 200 hours of student learning activity, including contact time, directed learning, assessed work and private study (there is no minimum specified contact time);
- is normally studied on either a whole-year or a half-year basis, depending on the programme structure.

2.2.3 Wherever possible, the standard module size is used but the following sizes are permissible:

| Size | Credit Rating | Learning Hours |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Quarter | 5 | 50 |
| Half | 10 | 100 |
| Three Quarters | 15 | 150 |
| Single (Standard) | 20 | 200 |
| One and a Half | 30 | 300 |
| Double | 40 | 400 |
| Triple | 60 | 600 |

2.2.4 There are five levels of module:

| Level of module | Stage of study at which modules are typically studied | Year of study at which Stage is typically followed |
|-----------------|--|--|
| 3 | Foundation year | |
| 4 | Stage 1 – Certificate of Higher Education/Higher National Certificate | Full-time undergraduate year 1 |
| 5 | Stage 2 – Diploma of Higher Education / Foundation Degree / Higher National Diploma | Full-time undergraduate year 2 |
| 6 | Stage 3 – Bachelor's Degree | Full-time undergraduate year 3 |
| 6 | Stage 4 - Bachelor's Degree. Four year programmes which include a placement year, or similar additional element, normally in the third year, complete Stage 4 at Level 6 for a Bachelor's degree | Full-time undergraduate year 4 |
| 7 | Stage 4 – Master's Degree | Full-time undergraduate year 4 - applicable only to Integrated Masters programmes within these regulations |

2.2.5 Types of modules are as follows.

- Core:** module which all students taking a particular programme are required to take.
- Option:** one of a group of modules from which a choice must be made within a particular programme.
- Elective:** module undertaken as a free choice which may be outside the primary area of study.

- (d) **Pre-requisite:** module which students are required to pass, prior to proceeding to a specific module. Pre-requisites are not permitted within a Stage.
- (e) **Co-requisite:** module which students are required to take in conjunction with other specific module(s).

2.3 **Study Requirements**

- 2.3.1 The study load for a full-time student is 120 credits per year. The maximum load is 140 credits per year, including any failed module trailed under 4.3.3. The maximum study load for a part-time student is 90 credits per year.
- 2.3.2 The maximum period of registration on a programme of study is three times the normal full-time registration period, i.e. 9 years for a three-year degree programme. Some programme-specific regulations specify a shorter timescale. This includes intercalation due to extenuating circumstances.
- 2.3.3 The standard teaching year comprises three terms, totalling 34 weeks including assessment time. However, some programmes may be delivered in ways which differ from the standard pattern. The teaching day is 0900 to 2100.
- 2.3.4 Students are expected to engage with their programme of study, including attendance at lectures, seminars and any other timetabled teaching sessions. The University monitors the attendance of students on campus so that those who may be at risk of disengaging can be offered support and advice and those who do not attend any classes for a period of four weeks and fail to respond to contact arising from it will be withdrawn from their programme. Students in collaborative partner institutions are subject to the same regulation where their attendance is monitored by their college. Some programmes have an attendance requirement set by a professional body; where this is more rigorous than that set by the University the requirement of the professional body will prevail.
- 2.3.5 The language of teaching, learning and assessment is English. Unless required as part of academic requirements of the programme, all work presented as part of any formal assessment activity must be presented in English. Where work within any element of assessment is not in English then that part will not be considered in the assessment process.

3 **STUDENT REGISTRATION**

- 3.1 Students are required to conform to the University's processes and schedules for module and programme registration which are published annually. Neither module change nor late registration for a module is permissible unless agreed by the Programme and Module Leaders having regard to specified exceptional individual circumstances.
- 3.2 Each student must be registered in each year of study for the programme to which he/she has been admitted and for the modules within that programme which he/she is to take. Full-time students must be registered for 120 credits per academic year. Part-time students may register for up to 90 credits.

- 3.3 A student may not register on an undergraduate programme for more than 120 credits in one academic year unless he/she is trailing a failed module in which case he/she may register for 140 credits.
- 3.4 A student who wishes to take additional modules must do so by registering for them separately. This includes registration for a short course or a further programme. Such registration requires the approval of the programme/course/module leader(s) of the student's original programme and of the student's additional course of study before he/she may be allowed to register. The assessment of such additional study will not contribute to the assessment of the student's initial programme of study. A separate fee is charged for any additional study.
- 3.5 At each Stage students must register for modules in line with the programme-specific regulations which specify compulsory modules, optional modules and, where applicable, the provision for a student to take a module of choice from elsewhere in the University. The table below shows the minimum and maximum number of credits which programme-specific regulations may allow students to take from modules at each Level within a given Stage of study. So, for example, at Stage 2 a programme must consist of at least 100 credits of Level 5 modules and not more than 120 credits of Level 5 modules, and may include up to 20 credits of Level 4 modules to make a total of 120 credits for the Stage. Modules from Level 6 or 7 may not be included within a Stage 2 programme of study. Students whose programme-specific regulations do not allow them to take modules from the Level below that at which they are studying may not do so.

| | Level 3 credits | Level 4 credits | Level 5 credits | Level 6 credits | Level 7 credits | Total credits |
|-----------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Stage 0 | 120 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 120 |
| Stage 1 | 0 | 120 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 120 |
| Stage 2 | 0 | 0-20 | 100-120 | 0 | 0 | 120 |
| Stage 3* | 0 | 0 | 0-20 | 100-120 | 0 | 120 |
| Stage 4** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 120 | 120 |

* and Stage 4 of programmes including an additional placement year or equivalent after Stage 2.

** Integrated Masters programmes only within these regulations

At Stage 3 a student may elect to register for only 60 credits and so be eligible for an Ordinary degree. In this case all the credits must be at Level 6. Such a student will be studying part-time. However, a student who has entered Stage 3 with advanced standing (i.e. to the value of 240 credits) must register for 120 credits at Stage 3, with an Honours degree as the target award, so that he/she does not contravene regulation 1.2.2 which sets a limit of two-thirds to the credits which may be given by advanced standing.

4 THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 Assessment is carried out and the outcomes determined in two phases: that of the module and that of the programme. Each module shall be assessed in accordance with its published assessment methods. Module assessment and reassessment

will take place at times specified by the relevant Module Assessment Board. Module Assessment Boards determine the marks for each module. Programme Assessment Boards receive marks from the Module Assessment Boards and determine progression and awards upon completion of all modules relating to a particular Stage of study. Boards may apply compensation where appropriate. Where deemed to be appropriate, combined Module and Programme Assessment Board arrangements may be approved by Academic Board.

- 4.1.2 The responsibility of each Module Assessment Board and Programme Assessment Board is to make its judgments on student performance within its own approved terms of reference and to record these using the approved progression codes.
- 4.1.3 In-module assessments must be submitted by fixed dates during the year. Students must be given written details at the start of a module of the assessment scheme for the module, and of the arrangements and timetable according to which assessed work must be submitted. Students are required to submit coursework as prescribed by the relevant module guide.
- 4.1.4 The Programme Assessment Board will produce a statement of the marks awarded and credits gained at each Stage for each student and will confirm the programme status of each student. Where a student has satisfied the requirements for an intermediate award (Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education or Ordinary degree), this will also be stated. The Board may require a student to withdraw from the programme, to repeat modules with or without attendance and/or to withdraw from study in full-time mode and to study part-time (to a maximum of 90 credits).
- 4.1.5 Where a student is eligible for the award of an Honours Degree, the Programme Assessment Board will award a classification according to the regulations for the award.

4.2 The Assessment of Modules

- 4.2.1 The overall pass mark for each module is 40%. To pass a module a student must also have submitted work for each element of assessment.
- 4.2.2 Where module assessment comprises two or more contributory elements, a pass will be awarded where a student achieves at least 40% in the overall module mark, providing that the student has submitted assessment in all elements. The student does not need to achieve a mark of 40% in each element.
- 4.2.3 A requirement may be imposed that students pass (at 40%) each element of assessment within the module to meet PSRB requirements or, where one or more learning outcomes are assessed in only one element of assessment, to ensure that module learning outcomes are met. Such a requirement must be approved on behalf of Academic Board and included in the programme-specific regulations and the module information provided to students.
- 4.2.4 In-module assessments which are not submitted by the required date will be given a mark of zero and coded as non-submissions unless extenuating circumstances can be demonstrated.
- 4.2.5 Where a module has a specific pre-requisite module, that module must be passed before a student proceeds to the requiring module. A compensated failure is counted as a pass for these purposes, but the mark is not altered.

- 4.2.6 A student who has passed a module at the first attempt either outright or by compensation (cf 5.2) may not re-take the module in order to achieve a higher mark, unless the student's performance is judged to have been affected by extenuating circumstances (see section 8).

4.3 The Re-assessment of Modules

4.3.1 Referrals

- (a) When a student fails to achieve the overall pass mark for the module at the first attempt, he/she will have the right to be re-assessed in that module, once only, without attendance, at a time specified by the appropriate Module Assessment Board. Up to 120 credits may be re-assessed in this way.
- (b) A student may only be referred in the elements which he/she has failed. Referral is not permitted in modules which are passed by compensation under regulation 5.2
- (c) When a student is re-assessed in a module (by coursework and/or by written examination) under 4.3.1(a) above, the marks obtained in the elements of assessment passed at the first attempt shall stand whereas the maximum mark that may be awarded for the referred elements is 40%. The overall mark for the module will be calculated on the basis of the original marks for the elements passed at the first attempt and the capped marks gained in the referred elements.
- (d) The form of the reassessment at any stage may vary from the original, at the discretion of the board of studies. Note that the board of studies may delegate this authority to the assessment board, but that the students who are to be reassessed must be informed of the style of reassessment to be adopted, including identification of the various assessment components and weighting. Changes to the format of assessment must apply to the whole cohort.

4.3.2 Repeat with attendance or by an alternative mode of study

- (a) When a student has failed a module at both the first attempt and when subsequently reassessed under 4.3.1, he or she may, at the discretion of the Programme Assessment Board and taking into account the recommendations of the Module Assessment Board, attempt that module again, once only, with attendance or in an alternative mode of study as deemed by the Board to be appropriate. In this case the student must remain at the same Stage and may not register to study modules for the next Stage. Up to 120 credits may be repeated in this way. Where applicable students may therefore be studying a full-time programme in part-time mode for one year. The standard applicable fee is charged.
- (b) In the case of a repeat with attendance or by an alternative mode of study the student will retake the assessment for all the elements of assessment and no marks from previous attempts will be carried forward. The overall mark for the module will be capped at 40%.
- (c) A student who fails assessment for the repeat is entitled to one final reassessment as a referral (cf 4.3.1). The marks for the referral(s) and for the module as a whole will be capped at 40%.

- (d) A student may be permitted by the Programme Leader to substitute an alternative module for a failed optional module at the point at which he/she is permitted to repeat with attendance. This does not however increase the total number of attempts permitted for progression or for confirmation of an award: i.e. the replacement module may be assessed twice, once on the first occasion of assessment and once (as of right) for a referral. No further attempts are permitted. The alternative module will be subject to the same capping as would have been the case for the original module if repeated.

4.3.3 Trailing a failed module

- (a) When a student has failed a module at both the first attempt and when subsequently reassessed under 4.3.1, he or she may, at the discretion of the Programme Assessment Board, be permitted to progress to the next Stage of study and to trail a failed module to the value of up to 20 credits in order to attempt that module again, once only, during the next academic year at the next normal occasion of assessment for the module. If timetabling permits, the student may attend lectures and other classes associated with the module during this period.
- (b) In the case of a trailed fail, the student will retake the assessment for all the elements of assessment and no marks from previous attempts will be carried forward. The overall mark for the module will be capped at 40%.
- (c) A student who fails the assessment for a trailed fail is entitled to one final reassessment as a referral (cf 4.3.1). The mark(s) for the referral(s) and for the module as a whole will be capped at 40%.
- (d) As in 4.3.2(d) a student may be permitted by the Programme Assessment Board to substitute an alternative module for a failed optional module at the point at which he/she is permitted to trail. Such an option is at the discretion of the Board. This does not however increase the total number of attempts permitted for progression or for confirmation of an award: i.e. the replacement module may be assessed twice, once on the first occasion of assessment and once (as of right) for a referral. No further attempts are permitted. The alternative module will be subject to the same capping as would have been the case for the original module if repeated.
- (e) A student has a total number of four attempts at assessment on a module. Should a student transfer route or programme of study and the new route or programme of study contains a module the student has already attempted the total number of attempts at assessment on the module does not increase: i.e. if the student had completed first attempt and referral attempt at a module assessment on their original route or programme of study, they would be permitted to be assessed twice on the module assessment, once on the first occasion of assessment and once (as of right) for a referral. No further attempts are permitted. The subsequent attempt will still be subject to the same capping as would have been the case if the student had completed the further attempts on the original route or programme of study.

5 PROGRESSION FROM ONE STAGE TO THE NEXT

5.1 General

- 5.1.1 A student may not progress to the next Stage of study until he/she has satisfied the requirements of the Stage for which he/she has been registered and he/she may not register for modules from the next Stage until he/she has progressed. Progression must be agreed by the Programme Assessment Board. This includes

the provision to allow a student to trail a failed module to the next Stage: such a student must be progressed notwithstanding the trailed fail.

- 5.1.2 A student may not be referred for re-assessment for a module until all the marks for all the elements of assessment have been received and his/her overall module mark has been confirmed by a Module Assessment Board. At the end of the Stage referral decisions will include consideration by the Programme Assessment Board of compensation between modules. A Module Assessment Board may also meet mid-Stage after one or more modules have been completed to confirm the marks for those modules and may offer students failing one or more modules an 'in-year' referral on the same basis as in 4.3.1 above.
- 5.1.3 A student offered an in-year referral:
- may be compensated at the end of the Stage after the referral by the Programme Assessment Board under 5.2 below on the basis of the original failed mark for the module, or the mark for the referral;
 - may not be given another referral after the Programme Assessment Board;
 - may make a request using approved procedures to defer the referral until a later time to manage his/her workload or until after the Programme Assessment Board has met at the end of the Stage to see the outcome of compensation between modules.
- 5.1.4 If a student fails to pass a module at the end of the permitted referrals and repeats and is required to leave the University, he/she will be awarded the exit qualification to which he/she is entitled.

5.2 Compensation between Modules

- 5.2.1 Where a student has attempted the required number of credits at Stage 1, Stage 2 or Stage 3, failure in up to 20 credits at each Stage will be compensated at programme level, providing that the student has:
- achieved at least 35% in the module concerned;
 - submitted all assessments for that module;
- and
- has an average mark across all other modules at that Stage of at least 45%.
- 5.2.2 A Board has the discretion to compensate a further 20 credits (for a maximum of 40 credits overall, in any combination of module sizes), again provided that the student has achieved at least 35% in the module concerned, has submitted all assessments for that module, and has an average mark across all other modules at that Stage of at least 45%.
- 5.2.3 The mark(s) achieved for the module(s) compensated will stand, and the credits for the module(s) will be awarded. The student will be allowed to progress to the next Stage of study. A compensated pass is accepted as a pass in a pre-requisite module.
- 5.2.4 If compensation of a module is not to be permitted, for example because it would infringe PSRB requirements, this must be approved on behalf of Academic Board as a programme-specific regulation and be included in the programme handbook.
- 5.2.5 Compensation between modules is not permitted at Level 7 of an Integrated Masters degree.

5.2.6 Compensation must be applied wherever the mark profile permits at the earliest occasion. Once compensation has been given a module may not be referred, repeated or trailed under regulations 4.3.1, 4.3.2 or 4.3.3.

6 REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARDS

6.1 General

6.1.1 To obtain an award a student must gain credits as follows:

| | Total number of credits | Level of award | Number of credits at level of award | Note on credits |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| HE Credit | 10-110 | Level 4 | 10-110 | HE Credit/Higher Education Credit is awarded to a student who has gained credits but not sufficient for a higher award. |
| Certificate of Higher Education | 120 | Level 4 | 120 | |
| Higher National Certificate | 120 | Level 4 | 120 | |
| Higher National Diploma | 240 | Level 5 | 120 | 120 Level 4 credits taken at Stage 1. If only 100 Level 5 credits are taken, a further 20 Level 4 credits must be taken at Stage 2 to make a total of 240. |
| Foundation Degree | 240 | Level 5 | At least 100; up to 120 | 120 Level 4 credits taken at Stage 1. If only 100 Level 5 credits are taken, a further 20 Level 4 credits must be taken at Stage 2 to make a total of 240. |
| Diploma of Higher Education | 240 | Level 5 | At least 100; up to 120 | 120 Level 4 credits taken at Stage 1. If only 100 Level 5 credits are taken, a further 20 Level 4 credits must be taken at Stage 2 to make a total of 240. |
| Ordinary Degree | 300 | Level 6 | 60 | 240 credits from Stages 1 and 2. At Stage 3 all 60 credits must be at Level 6. |
| Bachelor's Degree with Honours | 360 | Level 6 | At least 100; up to 120 | 240 credits from Stages 1 and 2. If only 100 Level 6 credits are taken, a further 20 Level 5 credits must be taken at Stage 3 to make a total of 360. |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|---------|-----|--|
| Integrated Master's Degree | 480 | Level 7 | 120 | 360 credits from Stages 1-3. All Stage 4 credits must be at Level 7. |
|----------------------------|-----|---------|-----|--|

- 6.1.2 In addition a student may be required to fulfil other academic commitments as specified in the programme regulations, such as to pass a placement.
- 6.1.3 Exit qualifications may be awarded for all Honours and Integrated Masters degrees as Certificates or Diplomas of Higher Education or Ordinary degrees, and for Foundation Degrees as Certificates of Higher Education. The name of the exit qualification shall be the same as that for the Honours degree unless an alternative name is approved at programme validation and recorded as a programme-specific regulation. The exit qualification for a Higher National Diploma shall be a Higher National Certificate. The name of the exit qualification shall be the same as that for the Diploma unless an alternative name is approved at programme validation and recorded as a programme-specific regulation.
- 6.1.4 A student may choose to leave the University with the exit qualification to which he/she is entitled at any time. A student who is eligible for the award of an Ordinary Degree can accept either the award, or where they are eligible to do so can elect to proceed to reassessment of any failed modules at the next normal occasion. Students are not permitted to resubmit work after accepting the award of an Ordinary Degree in order to obtain a higher award.
- 6.1.5 A student who, by completion of programme requirements, has received, or is eligible to receive, an award, may not submit additional work for assessment for the purpose of improving an award classification.
- 6.1.6 Credits gained for a module may be counted towards only one named degree award or towards an interim award within the programme culminating in that final named degree award.
- 6.1.7 Within a continuous programme of study, where a student has satisfied the requirements for an interim award within a programme leading to a further award, the University will not confer the first award unless and until the student ceases to be a candidate for, or fails to meet the requirements of, the further award.
- 6.1.8 A Foundation Certificate may be awarded to students who have passed 120 credits at Level 3 on an approved extended degree or Stage 0 programme but who choose not to progress to Stage 1; this award may not be used as an exit qualification from a higher award.
- 6.1.9 A student who has entered with advanced standing is eligible for an interim award (e.g. Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education as an exit award from an honours degree) only if she/he has completed at least one third of that interim award at the University of Sunderland.
- 6.1.10 Notwithstanding 6.1.9 above, if a student is admitted to Stage 3 of an undergraduate programme, he/she may be awarded an Ordinary degree as an exit award provided that the student has both:
- registered for the full diet of 120 credits at Stage 3 with an Honours degree as the target award
- and
- gained at least 60 credits from the Stage 3 work.

A student who fails to complete at least 60 credits in this way is not eligible for any award but will be given a transcript show the credits which she/he has obtained.

6.1.11 Where modules which are applicable to the classification process are marked on a pass/fail basis they should be excluded from the classification calculation as follows:

- pass/fail modules to the value of 20 credits are excluded under the provision that the best 100 credits from each of the relevant Stages are taken into account for classification purposes;
- any remaining pass/fail modules are discounted from the averaging process which is undertaken in the usual way for the marks of the available modules marked to a percentage scale, weighted by the total credit value of those modules.

The weighting of the average for classification purposes between the relevant Stages is unchanged.

6.1.12 For placement classification regulations see AQH-M1-4 Placement Regulations for Taught Programmes

6.1.13 Any modules taken in another HEI during the student's period of registration, for example during a semester or a year abroad, must be included in the student's record with a credit value and a mark and used to classify the degree or make any other award in the usual way. The mark may either be translated into a percentage using the Sunderland scale or logged as pass/fail. Such modules should not be treated as credit with advanced standing.

6.2 Certificate and Diploma of Higher Education

6.2.1 A Certificate of Higher Education with Distinction will be awarded to a student who obtains a mean average of at least 70% in the modules taken at Level 4.

6.2.2 A Diploma of Higher Education with Distinction will be awarded to a student who obtains a mean average of at least 70% in the modules taken at Level 5.

6.3 Foundation Degree

6.3.1 A pass is awarded for the achievement of the required number of credits, either outright or by compensation in accordance with the regulations above.

6.3.2 A classification of Merit or Distinction is awarded on the basis of a weighted mean average of the module marks for the best 100 credits obtained at Stage 2. If that average is 70% or higher, then a Distinction will be awarded. If that average is 60% or higher, then a Merit will be awarded.

6.3.3 A 2% borderline will apply to the classification boundaries (i.e. if the student achieves 58-59.99% or 68-69.99% in the credit-weighted Stage 2 average). Where a result is borderline, the student will be moved into the higher classification if sixty or more credits at Stage 2 are at the higher level (i.e. 70% or higher for a Distinction, 60% or higher for a Merit).

6.4 Higher National Certificates and Diplomas

6.4 Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma

- 6.4.1 A pass is awarded for the achievement of the required number of credits, either outright or by compensation in accordance with the regulations above.
- 6.4.2 A classification of Merit or Distinction for the Higher National Diploma is awarded on the basis of a weighted mean average of the module marks for the best 100 credits obtained at Stage 2. If that average is 70% or higher, then a Distinction will be awarded. If that average is 60% or higher, then a Merit will be awarded.
- 6.4.3 A 2% borderline will apply to the classification boundaries (i.e. if the student achieves 58-59.99% or 68-69.99% in the credit-weighted Stage 2 average). Where a result is borderline, the student will be moved into the higher classification if sixty or more credits at Stage 2 are at the higher level (i.e. 70% or higher for a Distinction, 60% or higher for a Merit).
- 6.4.4 A classification of Merit or Distinction for the Higher National Certificate is awarded on the basis of a weighted mean average of the module marks for the best 100 credits obtained on the programme. If that average is 70% or higher, then a Distinction will be awarded. If that average is 60% or higher, then a Merit will be awarded.
- 6.4.5 A 2% borderline will apply to the classification boundaries (i.e. if the student achieves 58-59.99% or 68-69.99% in the credit-weighted average). Where a result is borderline, the student will be moved into the higher classification if sixty or more credits are at the higher level (i.e. 70% or higher for a Distinction, 60% or higher for a Merit).

6.5 Bachelor's and Master's Degrees

- 6.5.1 The Honours Degree classification bands are as follows:

| | | | | |
|-----|---|--------|---|--------------------|
| 70% | - | 100% | = | First Class |
| 60% | - | 69.99% | = | Upper Second Class |
| 50% | - | 59.99% | = | Lower Second Class |
| 40% | - | 49.99% | = | Third Class |
| 0% | - | 39.99% | = | Fail |

6.5.2 Bachelor's Degree with Honours

An Honours degree is awarded on the basis of a weighted mean average of:

- the marks for the best 100 credits obtained at Stage 2
- and
- the marks for the best 100 credits obtained at Stage 3.

The mean average for the best 100 credits at each Stage is obtained and then weighted so that the Stage 2 marks are worth 20% and the Stage 3 marks are worth 80%. A final mean average is obtained on the basis of this weighting and this determines the degree classification.

A Final Stage (Top-up) Bachelor's Degree is the mean average for the best 100 credits at Stage 3 and this determines the degree classification.

6.5.3 Integrated Master's degree

An Integrated Master's degree is awarded on the basis of a weighted mean average of:

- the marks for all 120 credits obtained at Stage 2
and
- the marks for all 120 credits obtained at Stage 3
and
- the marks for all 120 credits obtained at Stage 4.

The mean average for the credits at each Stage is obtained and then weighted so that the Stage 2 marks are worth 10%, the Stage 3 marks are worth 30% and the Stage 4 marks are worth 60%. A final mean average is obtained on the basis of this weighting and this determines the degree classification.

6.5.4 Ordinary degree

An Ordinary degree is not classified and is awarded if the student obtains the required number of credits.

6.6 Credits Awarded by Advanced Standing

6.6.1 Marks obtained for credits imported by advanced standing are not used in calculating a degree classification or the award of a Distinction for a Certificate or Diploma or a Commendation for a Foundation Degree, or any classification such as Merit or Distinction in HNC/HND or Foundation degree. The award is calculated on the basis of the marks obtained from modules taught and assessed at Sunderland using the appropriate formula specified in 6.4 above to weight the average marks. Where a student has entered directly into Stage 3 the degree classification is based solely on the mean average of the marks obtained for the best 100 credits at Stage 3.

6.6.2 In the case of a student seeking to convert a Sunderland Ordinary degree into an Honours degree by obtaining an additional 60 credits at Stage 3, all the University of Sunderland credits at Stages 2 and 3 are counted as part of the Honours award using the classification formula specified in 6.4 above. Regulation 6.5.1 above applies if any of these credits were awarded by advanced standing or if the student was a direct entrant to Stage 3.

6.6.3 Where a student has entered directly into Stage 3 of an Integrated Master's Degree, the award is calculated on the basis of the weighted mean average of 120 credits at Stage 3 and 120 credits at Stage 4. The mean average for the credits at each Stage is obtained and then weighted so that the Stage 3 marks are worth 40% and the Stage 4 marks are worth 60%. A final mean average is obtained on the basis of this weighting and this determines the degree classification.

7 **DISCRETION OF THE ASSESSMENT BOARD**

7.1 Assessment Boards have the power to exercise their discretion in the light of their academic judgement to ensure that students are treated equitably and that academic standards are maintained. In exercising their discretion Assessment Boards must take account of the views of the external examiner(s) and should ensure that decisions are taken in the spirit of these regulations. Decisions reached as a result of the exercise of discretion must be minuted together with the reasons for the decision.

7.2 Boards will particularly exercise their discretion in the case of:

- decisions relating to students with extenuating circumstances;
- decisions relating to cohorts or to individual students whose academic experience has been disrupted for reasons beyond their control other than those which naturally fall within the terms of extenuating circumstances.

These factors should be considered in the light of the learning outcomes of the programme and the award descriptors in the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Under no circumstances should personal information about the student be imported into the discussion.

- 7.3 A 2% borderline will apply to the classification boundaries (i.e. if the student achieves 48-49.99%, 58-59.99% or 68-69.99% in the final credit-weighted average). Where a result is borderline, the student will be moved into the higher classification if sixty or more credits at the final stage are at the higher classification level. There is no borderline between a fail (i.e. below 40%) and the start of the third class range.
- 7.4 Marks below the 2% borderline boundary will not be reviewed other than in the case of extenuating circumstances. The final mark obtained by the averaging process is used to determine whether a student is within a borderline: it is not rounded beyond that which is done automatically by the SITS system (to two decimal places). Where a decision is made under 7.2 to award a higher classification, the marks for the modules and their elements must stand; a higher award is made notwithstanding the run of marks.

8 EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of students to attend examinations and submit work for assessment as required and to report, in writing, in advance of the published date(s) of the relevant Assessment Board(s), any extenuating circumstances which may have affected their performance prior to, or during, assessment. Any student who takes an examination, submits coursework, or participates in a presentation, practical session or other form of assessment has deemed him/herself fit to engage, and other than in exceptional circumstances cannot subsequently claim extenuating circumstances. Full details of the process can be found in the University's 'Procedures for Extenuating Circumstances'.
- 8.2 If a student fails, without good cause, to provide information about extenuating circumstances in accordance with the procedures laid out in the Procedures for Extenuating Circumstances, the Module Assessment Board, Programme Assessment Board, Academic Board, or any other University body authorised to consider requests for reviews of Assessment Board decisions, has the authority to reject such a request on these grounds.
- 8.3 If it is established to the satisfaction of the Assessment Board that a student's absence or failure to submit work in all or part of an assessment for an award was due to illness, or other cause found valid on production of acceptable evidence, the Board may exercise its discretion to address the case, including in exceptional circumstances only cases where the student, by submission of work, has declared him/herself to be fit to engage with the assessment. The Board may exercise its discretion to:
- permit the student to be deferred in the assessment (i.e. be reassessed as if at the original assessment point without penalty);

- permit the student an additional or exceptional referral or repeat or trail (subject to the attendance and assessment requirements and marks penalties in 4.3 above as applicable);
 - condone failure in the assessment to allow the student to progress or receive an award notwithstanding failure but without changing the mark; and hence:
 - allow the student to progress or to receive an award.
- 8.4 Where there is insufficient evidence to determine the recommendation of an award but the Programme Assessment Board is nevertheless satisfied that the student would have qualified for the award for which he/she was a candidate had it not been for illness or other valid cause, an Aegrotat award may be made. Aegrotat awards are unclassified and cannot be given with Distinction or Commendation.
- 8.5 Where a decision to condone failure, and, where applicable, to progress the student or to make an award is made on the grounds of extenuating circumstances, the student must have signified that he/she is willing to accept the award/decision and understands that this implies waiving the right to be reassessed under 8.3 above.
- 8.6 Any award listed in these regulations may be conferred posthumously by a Programme Assessment Board, provided that the normal conditions of award are satisfied. The Programme Assessment Board may seek permission of the Chair of Academic Board to make an award where the normal conditions of the award are not fully met, but the Programme Assessment Board is nevertheless satisfied that the student would have qualified for the award for which he /she was a candidate.

9 APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION OF AN ASSESSMENT BOARD

- 9.1 The Academic Board, or a review group authorised by it, may in the following circumstances require an Assessment Board to reconsider its decision
- (a) if a student requests such a reconsideration and establishes to the satisfaction of the Academic Board or review group that his/her performance in the assessment was adversely affected by illness or other factors which he/she was unable, or, for valid reasons, unwilling to divulge before the Assessment Board reached its decision. The student's request must be supported by medical certificates or other documentary evidence acceptable to the Academic Board;
 - (b) if the Academic Board or review group is satisfied on evidence produced that there has been a material irregularity in administration, or in the assessment of the programme, or that some other material irregularity has occurred.
- 9.2 All requests for reviews of assessment decisions will be conducted in accordance with the Academic Appeals Procedure agreed by the Academic Board.

10. REVOCATION OF AWARDS

The University may revoke an award, and all privileges and rights associated with that award, where it is established that a person who has followed a programme of study or a programme of supervised research has obtained an award by fraud or deception or where other circumstances come to light after the award is made

which if known at the time, would have meant that the award would not have been made.

Where such fraud or deception is alleged, a recommendation for revocation of award must be made to the Vice-Chancellor, acting as Chair of Academic Board, by the Chair of the relevant Programme Assessment Board.

If a decision to revoke the award is made, a notice of revocation will be sent out from the Vice-Chancellor. The individual concerned may appeal this decision via the University's Academic Appeals Procedure. In this case, the individual will have six weeks from the date of the issuing of the notice of revocation to appeal the decision. All other parts of the Appeals Procedure will apply, and when that process has been exhausted, the individual will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

THE ACADEMIC AWARDS OF THE UNIVERSITY

The undergraduate awards of the University are

- (a) Certificates and Diplomas
 - (i) Foundation Certificate
 - (ii) Certificate of Higher Education
 - (iii) Diploma of Higher Education
 - (iv) Certificate in Professional Studies
 - (v) Diploma in Professional Studies
 - (vi) Graduate Certificate of Higher Education
 - (vii) Graduate Diploma of Higher Education
 - (viii) Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- (b) Higher National awards
 - i) Higher National Certificate
 - ii) Higher National Diploma
- (c) Foundation Degrees
 - (i) Foundation Degree in Arts (FdA)
 - (ii) Foundation Degree in Science (FdSc)
 - (iii) Foundation Degree in Engineering (FdEng)
- (d) Bachelor's Degrees
 - (i) Bachelor of Arts (BA)
 - (ii) Bachelor of Engineering (BEng)
 - (iii) Bachelor of Music (BMus)
 - (iv) Bachelor of Science (BSc)
 - (v) Bachelor of Laws (LLB)