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20 Annex 1: Assessment Regulations

General

1. Decisions on whether a student has successfully completed a unit, on progression, and on the award of qualifications, will be made on the basis of the student's performance by the Unit Assessment or Progression & Awards Boards responsible for the unit(s) and the course.
2. These regulations cover all taught awards as listed in the University Schedule of Awards, Annex 2 to the Academic Framework, and for all professional development / partnership units, and professional development awards, and must be followed unless an exemption has been approved.

Registration periods for unit awards and courses

3. To be eligible for an award a student must be registered on the award and all awards must have been completed within the approved maximum registration periods specified in table 1.
4. Students who, at the discretion of the University, transfer to a flexible mode of attendance for a period of time will have their maximum registration period calculated pro-rata according to the attendance modes studies, this will not exceed the part-time maximum registration period specified in table 1.
5. Since the University encourages the use of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process and advanced standing there are no minimum registration periods for awards.
6. A student will normally be entitled to receive only one Southampton Solent University award as a result of a continuous period of registration.
7. Students registered on research degrees may register on taught courses and units in addition to their research degree.
8. The registration requirements for a named award, including the extra time granted to make good credit point deficits and periods of formal suspension, must be met within the standard length (as approved at validation) plus two years.
9. Direct-entry students will have their maximum periods of registration shortened by one year (full-time) or two years (part-time) for each complete level with which they enter.

10. Students who transfer between attendance modes will have their registration periods calculated pro rata.

11. Professional development awards are based on credit accumulation and awarded after the credit has been achieved: there is no registration period. To ensure currency and validity, credit awarded under the professional development needs to be achieved in the time limits specified in table 2

Table 1. Indicative registration periods

Traditional Qualifications	FHEQ Level	Indicative FT Length	Full time Maximum Registration	Indicative PT Length	Part time Maximum Registration
Foundation Certificate	3	1	3	2	4
Certificate of Higher Education	4	1	3	2	4
Diploma of Higher Education	5	2	4	4	6
Foundation Degree	5	2	4	3	5
Higher National Diploma	5	2	4	4	6
Top-up Degree	6	1	3	2	4
Degree or Honours Degree	6	3	5	6	8
Graduate Diploma	6	1	3	2	4
Postgraduate Certificate	7	-	-	1	3
Postgraduate Diploma	7	1	3	2	4
Integrated Masters	7	4	6	8	10
Masters	7	1	3	2	4

Table 2 Time limits for professional development awards

Professional development Qualification	Level	Time limit (years)
Unit	4-7	1
Professional Development Certificate	4	5
Professional Development Diploma	5	8
Professional Development Graduate Diploma	6	10
Postgraduate Professional Development Certificate	7	5
Postgraduate Professional Development Diploma	7	7

12. Professional development Units need to be completed within one academic session (i.e. within 12 months of starting the unit).

Assessment of Units

13. Students will be offered a first attempt and two further referral attempts for each element where they have failed to achieve a pass mark for the unit, except where the level of failure warrants a repeat level.

14. Every time a unit is offered to students it must have a defined academic session start and end date. The first assessment attempt (first sitting) for all elements must be scheduled to occur before the end date of the unit.

15. The form of assessment for each unit must be specified within the unit descriptor. Where there is more than one element of assessment, the weighting attached to each element must be stated on the unit descriptor.

16. Exceptionally, there may be a requirement for individual assessment elements to be passed in their own right. Such exceptions must be approved through either the programme approval or unit and programme modification processes and stated on the unit descriptor.

17. Students taking the same unit will be assessed according to the same assessment strategy and one Unit Assessment Board will ratify the marks for all the students taking that unit.

Unit pass mark

18. The overall unit pass mark is 40% or where a unit is validated as pass/fail, the pass grade of pass (or its equivalent) will be used. Units with pass/fail unit outcomes are excluded from the award classification.

19. The grades/marks for all elements of assessment will be aggregated by the assessment sitting to determine the overall unit result for that sitting. This is the mark that will be presented to the Unit Assessment Board. For the purposes of progression and award the best mark achieved for each element will be aggregated, regardless of sitting.

20. When a unit profile at a sitting includes a 'defer', the sitting unit mark will be calculated on the marks available and regardless of the unit outcome the student will be offered an opportunity to make good the deferred element at the next sitting.

21. In line with the grade marking philosophy, unit marks ending in a 9 will be rounded up to the next decile.

22. All unit marks are calculated up or down to the nearest integer e.g. 54.4 is recorded as a unit mark of 54; 54.8 is recorded as a unit mark of 55. Award classifications are calculated using whole unit marks (integers).

Late submission of coursework

23. Coursework, which is submitted no later than five working days after the scheduled submission date, without an approved extension request, will be marked as normal and a penalty mark of 40% will be awarded.

24. Coursework submitted for the first assessment attempt more than five working days after the scheduled hand-in date will be treated as a non-submission and awarded a mark of zero.

25. For referral work there is no late submission period, with the exception of any approved Extenuating Circumstances applications. Any referral work submitted after the scheduled hand in date will be treated as a non-submission and awarded a mark of zero.

Extension of an assessment submission deadline date

26. Students may submit a request for an extension to an assessment submission date where Extenuating Circumstances have impacted on their learning and where a later submission would put them in a position of being 'fit to study' and to complete the work.

27. All approved extension requests will result in the student having an additional five working days from the deadline date in which to submit their assessment. Students who submit after five working days of the deadline submission date, with or without an approved extension request, will not have their assessment marked. The assessment will be regarded as a non-submission for assessment purposes.

Non-submissions

28. Students are required to make a credible, reasonable attempt at all assessments by showing that:

- a) the work is in the form required by the assessment brief; and
- b) the academic content of the assessment addresses the specified topic.

29. Submissions which do not meet these criteria will be regarded as a Non-Submission for assessment purposes and awarded a mark of zero.

Extenuating Circumstances

30. Students can only be deferred in assessments where they have Extenuating Circumstances approved by the University's Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

Reassessment attempts

31. Students shall have the right to be reassessed twice in any and all failed units at Levels 3-7, except where the recommendation of a Student Academic Misconduct Inquiry Panel invokes a 'no right to re-sit' academic penalty or where students have been awarded a repeat stage/level.

32. Students shall not be referred in, or re-take, any passed element of assessment except where students are required to repeat a stage/level or where an academic misconduct penalty of fail unit has been recommended.

33. Students must retake any failed assessment elements at the next available sitting but may elect to re-sit/resubmit an assessment earlier where this opportunity is available.

34. Where a student has passed a unit, but been deferred in an element they will be offered the opportunity to take the deferred element.

35. If a student has failed to achieve a pass mark in a unit after all reassessment attempts have been exhausted the unit will be deemed to have been irretrievably failed and no further reassessment attempts offered.

36. Where any optional unit has been failed at the first attempt the student shall have the right to substitute, once during the period of their registration, another available option and to be taught and assessed in that option, as if for the first time, unless the failure was as a result of receiving an academic misconduct penalty of failing the unit with no right to resit.

37. A penalty mark of 40% will be awarded for a referred assessment element that has been passed.

38. Where a student is retaking an assessment element as a result of a proven case of academic misconduct, they must make a valid attempt (see paragraph 27) at the referred element. If no valid attempt is made, the unit mark will be capped at F2 (Fail).

39. Where a student has submitted Extenuating Circumstances which have been accepted, they will be offered a deferral, that is, another attempt to take the missed assessment element. In such cases, the deferred assessment element will be marked as normal and the earned mark awarded. In cases where a deferral is offered in respect of an assessment which has previously been referred, the mark will be capped at 40%.

PROGRESSION AND AWARDS

Condonement

40. Condonement will be used to re-dress marginal failure and will be applied automatically when all the criteria for condonement has been met. Where students are eligible for condonement in more than one unit at that level, the unit with the highest average mark will be condoned. If, exceptionally, a Director or Head considers a condonement decision should not be applied then they must apply to the Academic Registrar for an exemption from this regulation.

41. Condonement may not be applied to units where a student has failed an element which has been designated as a 'must pass' or where a student has failed the unit as a result of receiving an academic misconduct penalty of failing the unit with no right to resit.

42. Condonement can only be used when a student has attempted all assessments for a given sitting.

43. Condonement may only be awarded when a student has obtained a minimum mark of 30% in each assessment element.

44. At Levels 3-6 and additionally level 7 of Integrated Masters courses condonement will be permitted up to 20-credit points (whole units only) per level.

45. At Level 7 (not including Integrated Masters courses) condonement will be permitted up to 30 credit points (whole units only).

46. Where a student has attempted and irretrievably failed a Level 4 and/or a Level 5 unit, but obtained a Level 6 average of 50% or more, the irretrievable fail(s) will be condoned and the credit awarded to enable a student to qualify for an Honours degree, rather than an Ordinary degree. A maximum of one irretrievably failed unit at Level 4 and one irretrievably failed unit at Level 5 can be condoned under this regulation. This will not apply to any students who failed the unit(s) as a result of receiving an academic misconduct penalty of failing the unit with no right to resit.

47. Students studying a unit, which is not part of the defined course structure for a traditional award, may not be condoned.

Traditional Awards

48. For the definition of traditional awards see Section 2B, Annex 2.

Conferment of awards of students admitted with advanced standing

49. Progression & Awards Boards will take account of the credit value of the exempted stage/level in judging a student's eligibility against the thresholds set for conferment of University Awards. When calculating the final classification/result, only the units assessed at the University will be counted - no marks or grades for the exempted stage(s)/level(s) will be awarded.

Conferment of awards of students awarded RPL or credit through an Erasmus programme

50. When a student has been given credit for prior learning or through an Erasmus programme, Progression & Awards Boards will take account of that credit in judging the student's eligibility against the credit thresholds set for conferment of University Awards. When calculating the final classification/result, only the marks from units studied and passed at the University will be counted.

Undergraduate (including Integrated Masters)

Progression on Extended Degrees

51. A student may progress from the extended year (Level 3) to Level 4 with 100 credits as long as the failed credit(s) are not defined as 'must pass'.

52. Students will not be required to be reassessed in the failed 20 credits, but they retain the right to be reassessed if they wish. Credits gained at Level 3 do not count towards the credit requirements for the final degree.

Progression on Undergraduate awards

53. Students need to have achieved 100 credits to proceed to the next level of a full-time course.

54. For part time courses the number of credits that need to be passed in order to continue to the next stage of the course will be approved as part of course approval.

55. A student should be counselled as to the workload involved in working to retrieve outstanding credits whilst studying at the next stage/level.

56. Additionally Integrated Masters students must achieve an average of 50% or higher at Level 5 in order to progress to level 6 of the Integrated Masters course. Those not achieving this will have their registration transferred to the appropriate bachelors course.

Repeat stage/level

57. Students need to have passed 100 credits to be eligible to proceed to the next level. Where, following the resit period, they have not passed 100 credits they will be required to repeat the level.

58. Students who are referred in 60 credits or more at Level 3-5 will be required to repeat the level and will not be offered the referrals.

59. Level 6 students who are referred in 60 credits or more will be offered the opportunity to repeat the Level, accept an Ordinary degree or the exit award for which they are eligible. Integrated Masters students opting to repeat the level will have their registration transferred to the appropriate bachelors course. Where a student fails to notify the University of their choice within 10 working days they will be given the appropriate award.

60. Students who achieve more than 60 credits at Level 6, but are not eligible for an Honours degree or to progress to level 7 of an Integrated Masters course, will be offered the option to repeat the level, take the outstanding referrals/deferrals, accept an Ordinary degree or the exit award for which they are eligible. Integrated Masters students opting to repeat the level will have their registration transferred to the appropriate bachelors course. Where a student fails to notify the University of their choice within 10 working days they will be awarded the appropriate award.

61. Foundation degree and HND students who are referred in 60 credits or more will be offered the opportunity to repeat the level or accept the relevant exit award. Students who achieve more than 60 credits at Level 5 will be offered the option of a repeat level or taking the referral opportunities. Where a student fails to notify the University of their choice they will be awarded the referral opportunity.

62. Students can only repeat one level during their entire registration on a named award.

63. The repeat stage rules for courses that have designated stages will be approved during course approval.

64. In cases where a repeat stage/level is offered, students will be required to attend and to retake all assessments as if for the first time. No marks from the original attempt will be carried forward.

65. Students registered on awards comprising only one level will not be eligible for repeat level, including students enrolled on 'top-up' degrees and direct entry students entering level 6, and will be offered the appropriate referral opportunities.

Award of a Bachelors Degree

66. In order to complete a Degree with Honours students shall satisfy the requirements associated with such an award as set out in the programme specification.

67. Students may be considered for an Honours degree, having been assessed in and been awarded 360 credits. Students must have been assessed¹ in all units. For students admitted with RPL credits or advanced standing, only the units studied at Southampton Solent University will be considered in the classification.

68. Where a student has been assessed in 360 credits, and has achieved at least 300 credits, the student will be eligible for the award of an Ordinary degree.

69. 'Top-up' degree students may be considered for an Honours degree, having been assessed in and been awarded 120 credits. Student must have been assessed¹ in all units. For students admitted with RPL credits, only the units studied at Southampton Solent University will be considered in the classification.

70. 'Top-up' degree students who have been assessed in 120 credits, and have achieved at least 60 credits, will be eligible for the award of an Ordinary degree.

Award of an Integrated Masters Degree

71. In order to complete an Integrated Masters course students shall satisfy the requirements associated with such an award as set out in the programme specification.

72. Students may be considered for an Integrated Masters degree, having been assessed in and been awarded 480 credits. Students must have been assessed in all units¹. For students admitted with RPL credits or advanced standing, only the units studied at Southampton Solent University will be considered in the classification.

Classification of Honours Degrees

73. 'Top-up' degree classifications will be calculated using the weighted average unit marks for the best 100 credits at Level 6.

74. For all other degrees the classification mark will be calculated using the weighted average unit marks for the best 100 credits at Level 6 (weighted at 70%) combined with the best 100 credits from the remaining credits at Levels 5 and 6 (weighted at 30%). Classification averages are calculated to two decimal places.

75. The following overall classification mark will determine the Honours classification awarded, the classification boundaries are:

- a. 69.50% or more: First Class
- b. 59.50% - 69.49%: Second Class (First Division)
- c. 49.50% - 59.49%: Second Class (Second Division)
- d. 39.50%-49.49%: Third Class

Foundation Degrees

76. A student will be awarded a 'Pass' for obtaining 120 credits at Level 4 and 120 credits at Level 5.

77. A Foundation Degree with 'Merit' will be awarded if a student has achieved a weighted Level average of 59.5% at Level 5.

78. A Foundation Degree with 'Distinction' will be awarded if a student has a weighted level average of 69.5% at Level 5.

79. For students admitted with RPL credits or advanced standing, only the Level 5 units studied at Southampton Solent University will be considered in the classification.

¹ Credit awarded through the Recognition of Prior Learning Process is assessed credit

Higher Nationals

80. In accordance with Pearson Education Limited regulations, units must be awarded a grade of Fail, Pass, Merit or Distinction. Where percentages are used the following will apply:

- a. Pass 40% - 59.9%
- b. Merit 60% - 69.9%
- c. Distinction - 70%+

81. Condonement rules are the same as for Bachelors degrees and the grade awarded as Pass.

82. A maximum grade of Pass will be awarded for a referred element that has been completed satisfactorily. Assessment elements passed at the first attempt or deferred will be awarded the earned mark and the overall unit grade calculated as normal. Any referred elements will be capped at 40% (pass) and the normal aggregation rules followed to determine the unit grade.

Classification of Integrated Masters Degrees

83. Integrated Masters degree classification mark will be calculated using results from Levels 5, 6 and 7 as follows (classification averages are calculated to two decimal places):

- a. the average unit mark for Level 7 (weighted at 50%); plus
- b. the weighted average unit marks for the best 100 credits at Level 6 (weighted at 30%); plus
- c. the weighted average unit marks for the best 100 credits remaining at levels 5 and 6 (weighted 20%).

84. The following overall classification mark will determine the classification awarded, the classification boundaries are:

- a. 69.50% or more: First Class
- b. 59.50% - 69.49%: Second Class (First Division)
- c. 49.50% - 59.49%: Second Class (Second Division)
- d. 39.50% - 49.49%: Third Class

Exit awards

85. A student who withdraws or is withdrawn from a course, will be granted credit points for those units completed successfully, except where credit has been withdrawn as a result of an academic misconduct penalty.

86. Exiting students who have shown they have achieved the specified learning outcomes for an award at a lower level than that which they were originally registered on will be granted that award.

- a. Foundation Certificate for successful completion of at least 120 credits at Level 3 or higher;
- b. Certificate of Higher Education for successful completion of at least 120 credits, of which 90 credits or more must be at Level 4 or higher;
- c. Diploma of Higher Education for successful completion of at least 240 credits, of which a minimum of 90 credits or more must be at Level 5 or higher; and
- d. Bachelors degree for successful completion of at least 360 credits, of which a minimum of 90 credits must be at level 6 or higher (only applies to Integrated Masters courses)

Postgraduate Awards

Postgraduate Certificate

87. In order to obtain the award of Postgraduate Certificate (PgC) students must have been awarded 60 credits at level 7.

88. The only classification available is Pass.

Postgraduate Diploma

89. In order to obtain the award of Postgraduate Diploma (PgD) students must have been awarded 120 credits at level 7.

90. The only classification available is Pass.

91. For students admitted with advanced standing, only the Level 7 units studied at Southampton Solent University will be considered in the classification.

Masters

92. In order to obtain the award of a Masters degree, students must have been awarded 180 credits.

93. For students admitted with RPL credits or advanced standing, only the Level 7 units studied at Southampton Solent University will be considered in the classification.

Classification

Merit

94. A Masters degree will be awarded with Merit if a student has achieved a weighted level average of 59.5% or higher.

Distinction

95. A Masters degree will be awarded with Distinction if a student has achieved a weighted level average of 69.5% or higher.

Repeat stage/level

96. Not available at postgraduate level (not including integrated masters courses).

Posthumous Awards

97. An award may be conferred posthumously where a student was close to completing their course of study. The relevant Progression and Award Board will consider each case on an individual basis.

98. No classification shall be awarded in the case of a posthumous award.

99. The Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education may also be conferred as a posthumous award.

Aegrotat Awards

100. An Aegrotat award may be conferred where a student was close to achieving an award but due to illness or other valid reason, as approved by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, is unlikely to be able to complete their studies within the maximum registration period. The relevant Progression and Award Board will consider each case on an individual basis.

101. Where a student is receiving an Aegrotat postgraduate or undergraduate degree/Foundation degree no classification shall be awarded.

102. The Diploma of Higher Education and Postgraduate Diploma may also be conferred as an Aegrotat Diploma of Higher Education.

103. Aegrotat awards for students on other courses may be conferred in certain exceptional circumstances.

Professional Development Awards (PDAs)

104. Since PDAs are awarded on the basis of credit accumulation all credit to be considered as part of an award must have been processed by a unit assessment board and the credit awarded.

105. Aegrotat and posthumous awards are not available for PDAs.

106. Units cannot be condoned.

107. PDAs are unclassified awards.