



Taught Postgraduate Degree Regulations

For all postgraduate students registered for programmes awarded by
Spurgeon's College or Liverpool Hope University.

Taught Postgraduate Degree Regulations

VERSION: 1, March 2020 – for all postgraduate students registered for a degree awarded by Spurgeon’s College or Liverpool Hope University

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REGULATIONS

A. Credit and Award Framework

1. All awards of Spurgeon's College will be given on the basis of the accumulation of credit as mapped out in table 1 (below). Credit is awarded on the basis of units passed according to the College's Marking Criteria in force at the time. This table is based on the credit/awards and levels required by the national Framework of Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ):

Table 1: Credit and Postgraduate Award Framework:

Name of Award	Minimum credit for the award	ECTS	Minimum credits at the level of qualification	ECTS	FHEQ level
Masters	180	90	150	75	7
Postgraduate Diploma	120	60	120	60	7
Postgraduate Certificate	60	30	60	30	7

Note 1: the table refers to the levels as defined in the FHEQ. It may be of assistance to the reader to understand that Level 7 of the FHEQ relates to a Masters programme.

Note 2: One ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) is equivalent to two UK credits.

2. All students who exit prior to completion of the programme on which they registered will receive an exit award if they have achieved the appropriate amount of credit in accordance with that award, as specified in table 1, within 5 years of their initial registration.
3. A student must achieve the minimum amount of credit at the level of the qualification in accordance with table 1. However, (subject to the programme requirements) students can take credit at a higher or lower level in order to achieve the minimum credit for the award.

B. Title of Taught Awards

4. Titles of degrees can be found in the College's 'Titles of Degrees and other Distinctions'.

C. Accreditation of Prior Learning - AP(E)L / Rescinding Awards

5. A maximum time limit of 5 years should normally apply between award and consideration of AP(E)L.

6. Where the Postgraduate Certificate is a standalone programme, APL will be permitted up to a maximum of 30 credits. Where the Postgraduate Diploma is a standalone programme, APL will be permitted for up to a maximum of 60 credits. For a Masters award, APL, APEL or a combination will be permitted up to a maximum of 90 credits.
7. Students exiting with a Postgraduate Diploma (or Postgraduate Certificate) may be permitted to rescind this award and 'upgrade' to a Masters (or Postgraduate Diploma) by successfully completing the appropriate further component of the programme providing the following conditions are met:
 - The rescinding occurs within ten years of the award, subject to the programme still being available.
 - An overall pass, at the appropriate standard to assure admission to a Masters programme, was obtained for the Postgraduate Diploma (or Postgraduate Certificate) including any capped or compensated grades.
 For further guidance on rescinding awards, please see the College's Principles on Rescinding.
8. Students can receive an exit award if they have AP(E)L credit in their profile, providing their performance also satisfies the award requirements in table 1: Credit and Postgraduate Award framework (see Section A paragraph 1) and at least half of the credits have been awarded by the College.
9. The College may stipulate when AP(E)L is not allowed due to Professional Body requirements.

D. Assessment and Progression

10. Where students are required to progress to a research element including a dissertation or similar, the programme handbook will state the minimum requirements for progression to this element of the programme.
11. In accordance with the Student Attendance Policy, if a student fails a unit where there is documented evidence that their attendance or engagement has been unsatisfactory, and that they have not complied with the requirements imposed as a consequence, the Progression and Awards Board has the right to refuse referred assessment.
12. Where a student has failed on the first attempt or fails to qualify for a final award after compensation, referrals or the consideration of mitigation, the Progression and Awards Board may, at its discretion, award an Exit Award if the criteria are met in accordance with table 1 (see Section A paragraph 1).
13. The College may have alternative assessment regulations where these are required by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs).

E. Compensation

14. The compensation zone is defined by the Unit Marking Scheme for Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students.

15. PGT programmes can be compensated up to 30 credits for postgraduate (PG) Diploma/Masters and 15 credits for a PG Certificate. The total number of credits allowable for referral for a PG Diploma/Masters is 60, of which 30 can be compensated. For a PG Certificate, the total number of credits allowable for referral is 30 credits, of which 15 can be compensated.
16. Compensation can only be applied up to the maximum amount specified in E15. Beyond this maximum threshold, the Progression and Awards Board will make a decision on which reassessment can be taken.
17. The College can specify when a unit is not compensatable or when PSRB rules take precedence.
18. Compensated credit retains the original failed mark and this is used in the weighted average for the calculation of the final classification/ award.
19. Referral marks are compensatable.

F. Reassessment

20. Where the overall unit mark is below the compensation zone or the number of compensatable fails has been exceeded, reassessment may be taken, within the credit limitations set out in F24. Reassessment as a result of a fail is known as a 'Referral'. Subsequent attempts as a result of approved and verified mitigating circumstances are known as 'Deferrals'.
21. The reassessment must be designed to assess the achievement of the same intended learning outcomes but need not be of the same form as that originally used. The reassessment will normally take place in the same academic year as the original assessment to enable the students to progress as originally intended.
22. In accordance with the Student Attendance Policy, if a student fails a unit where there is documented evidence that their attendance or engagement has been unsatisfactory, and that they have not complied with the requirements imposed as a consequence, the Progression and Awards Board has the right to refuse referred assessment.
23. A Progression and Awards Board may allow a student two attempts, per unit, at reassessment (two attempts in total). This principle does not apply to attempts with approved and verified mitigating circumstances.
24. Postgraduate programmes can be referred in up to half of the taught credits; this includes credits on a PG Certificate or PG Diploma award. Students may also resubmit the dissertation (or equivalent, see F 25) on one occasion, subject to the mark restrictions set out in F26. The number of credits referred and those compensated cannot exceed half the taught credits in total.
25. When the referred assessment for a postgraduate student includes independent work such as a dissertation or project resubmission, they should be permitted a

reasonable amount of time within a maximum of six calendar months from the date of the Progression and Awards Board. This reassessment of a research/dissertation element does not contribute to the credit limitations set out in F24.

26. Students achieving a mark of less than 30 for their dissertation or project submission are not permitted to resubmit and will be given an exit award in accordance with table 1 (see section A, paragraph 1).
27. Referral pass marks will be capped at the lowest compensatable mark for PGT students, unless the previous mark was within the compensation zone, in which case the original mark will stand. This mark is used in the weighted average mark for the final award. The capped mark is applied to the unit level mark, not the failed element.
28. When a student fails a unit after one or two referrals, the first mark stands.
29. Students may, in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Progression and Awards Board, be allowed to repeat whole units or the entire programme, subject to teaching capacity not being exceeded.

G. Exit Awards

30. Once a student has exhausted all the opportunities to retrieve referred assessment they will be given an exit award in accordance with table 1 (see section A paragraph 1) and as defined in the Programme Specification.
31. If a student decides to withdraw, they will automatically be awarded the relevant exit award in accordance with table 1 (section A, paragraph 1) and as defined in the Programme Specification.

H. Classification of Postgraduate Taught Programmes

32. For the award of pass a student must satisfy the minimum credit requirements specified in Table 1 (“Credit and Postgraduate Award framework”, found within paragraph 1 of Section A, Credit and Award Framework, of these Postgraduate Taught Regulations).
33. Classifications for merit and distinction will be calculated on the basis of an average mark, based on the weighted programme as a whole (See Appendix A, Table A1).
34. In order to achieve the award of pass, merit or distinction, a student must have passed the requisite minimum credits listed in Table 1 (see section A, paragraph 1) in accordance with the unit marking scheme and mark descriptors.
35. Students with credit awarded as a result of a referral or compensated mark will not be eligible for the award of distinction, only a merit or a pass.

36. Decisions with regard to 'borderline' classifications for individual students should be resolved using the mechanisms outlined in Appendix A.

I. Posthumous and Aegrotat Degrees

37. A PGT degree may be awarded in the event of the death of a candidate prior to the completion of their degree (posthumous degree). For more information about posthumous degrees and the options open to Progression and Awards Boards, please see the College's Policy on Posthumous and Aegrotat Degrees.

38. A PGT degree may be awarded should the candidate be prevented from completing their degree due to the diagnosis of a terminal or debilitating illness (aegrotat degree). The Progression and Awards Board may determine from evidence available to it that a candidate for a PGT degree who has been prevented by good cause from completing the final examination or assessment will be awarded a class of degree the Board judges to be suitable, as long as the candidate has gained over half the credits required for the award.

J. Progression and Awards Boards Arrangements

39. There are normally three available assessment opportunities; January, May/June and August/September within each academic year. It is expected that all reassessment will normally take place in the academic year in which the assessment was first attempted.

40. There must be an opportunity after every assessment period for a chaired forum to make decisions regarding students' attainment on completed units.

41. Progression and Awards Boards will take place at the end of each academic year and at other points in the calendar where decisions are required with regard to progression, overseen by an External Examiner.

Appendix A: Postgraduate Degree Classification Scheme

1. This scheme should be used in conjunction with 'Table 1 of the Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations' (see section A, paragraph 1). This table has been extracted from the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, and students must meet the credit requirements of Table1, prior to the classification being calculated, using the thresholds and boundaries below.

Weightings

2. Postgraduate degree classification for the award of merit and distinction are based on the weighted average mark across the programme calculated to one decimal place, where marks for individual course units are recorded as whole numbers (see section H).

Stage 1: Classification Thresholds and Boundaries

3. The following boundaries inform classification when the total points falls below a classification threshold.

Table A1: Postgraduate Masters degree classification and boundary zone using total points 0-100 mark range:

PG Degree classification- Masters based on 180 credits	Classification thresholds average mark (mark range 0 to 100)	Boundary zone average
Distinction	70.0	68.0 to 69.9
Merit	60.0	58.0 to 59.9
Pass	59.9 or less providing the credit requirements of Table 1 in the 'Credit and Award Framework' have been met.	N/A

Consideration of postgraduate masters students within the boundary zone by mark distribution

4. The following process applies to reach decisions on borderline cases:

Stage 1:

5. After allowances have been made for mitigating circumstances, a student whose total mark at the first assessment is within the boundary zone specified above, must be awarded the higher degree classification as long as both the following criteria are satisfied (see also notes on AP(E)L):
- For the award of distinction, all course units must have been passed at the first attempt without any compensation.
 - 120 out of 180 credits are equal to or higher than the final award.

Stage 2: Classification Review

6. If a student is in the boundary zone, or higher*, and does not satisfy the additional criteria, the College may apply a further stage of 'Classification Review'. This provides a final opportunity for the Progression and Awards Board to use its academic judgement on degree classification for those who remain in the boundary zone. The process of 'Classification Review' should not change unit marks and can only influence the classification awarded.
7. It is **NOT** the intention that every student who is in the boundary zone and does not meet the criteria for a higher classification is subject to Classification Review. It allows the Progression and Awards Board to consider those cases which it believes as a group merit further consideration.
8. The Pre-Progression and Awards Board will identify any students in scope for Classification Review. These students will be flagged on mark grids the details noted on a separate 'breakout' document ready for the Progression and Awards Board. During the board itself, members review this data along with other variables such as exit velocity, the mark for any core units and the dissertation mark. A decision is then made on the student's classification as a group.
9. Award of Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate is based upon credit accumulation using a pass mark of 40% (see table 1 for credit requirements – section A, paragraph 1) for which there is no classification other than pass/fail.

** Progression and Awards Boards may use Classification Review to consider a programme average which is higher than the boundary average, but where the student has not met the requirements for classification outlined in section H of the Regulations.*

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