

# UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

## ACADEMIC REGULATIONS, 2021-22

**IMPORTANT:** These regulations set out the University's requirements for academic progression and awards. Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from the [International Student Advice](#) team.

These regulations apply only to registered students of the University and its academic partners.

**These are the standard University academic regulations. Students should also refer to their programme documentation, where any non-standard regulations will be explained.**

### Contents

Section A: Admissions.....	4
ADM1 Recognition of Prior Learning by Accreditation of Prior Learning.....	4
Section B: Student Registration and Enrolment .....	8
SRE1 Registration and Enrolment .....	8
SRE2 Student Transfers .....	14
SRE2.1 Transfer into the University or partner institution, from an external institution (taught programmes).....	15
SRE2.2 Internal transfer within the University, to another Faculty or partner institution (taught programmes) .....	16
SRE2.3 Incoming and outgoing student transfers (research degrees).....	17
SRE3 Registering for the Ordinary Degree Route / Top-up to Honours.....	18
SRE3.1. Registering for the Ordinary Degree Route .....	18
SRE3.2 Application to top-up an Ordinary Degree to an Honours degree. ....	18
Section C: Studying.....	20
SDY1 Programme structure .....	20
SDY2 Work Placements.....	26
SDY3 Study Abroad / Exchange .....	28
SDY4 Religious Observance in Teaching, Learning, Research and Assessment	29
SDY5 Study and Wellbeing Review .....	30
Section D: Assessment.....	31

AST1	Extenuating Circumstances .....	31
AST2	Submission for assessment (taught programmes only) .....	34
AST2.1	Late Submission of Coursework.....	35
AST2.2	Late arrival at a formal examination .....	36
AST2.3	Late arrival at an assessment on a professional programme. ....	36
AST2.4	Unreadable / inaccessible eSubmission.....	37
AST3	How to pass a Level (undergraduate only) .....	37
AST4	How to pass a module .....	38
AST5	Procedure in the event of failure (taught programmes / modules) .....	39
AST5.1	Compensation.....	39
AST5.2	Referral and repeat.....	40
AST5.3	Exclusion of a Student on the Grounds of Unsatisfactory Progress (either Academic or in Terms of Professional Development).....	45
AST6	Subject Assessment Panels and Award Assessment Boards (Taught programmes / modules) .....	46
AST6.1	Subject Assessment Panels.....	47
AST6.2	Award Assessment Boards.....	49
AST7	External Examiners.....	51
AST8	Progression for research degrees (PGR only) .....	52
AST8.1	Project Approval .....	52
AST8.2	Confirmation of Route.....	54
AST8.3	Failure to Progress.....	58
AST9	Examination of research degrees (PGR only).....	59
AST10	Examination and Academic Offences (Taught and Research programmes, including Research Misconduct) .....	65
AST10.1	Examination Offences – Taught modules.....	65
AST10.2	Academic Offences Regulations.....	72
AST10.3	Research Misconduct (Postgraduate Research degrees only) .....	79
AST11	Appeal Against the Decision of an Assessment Board (Taught students) or Academic Decision (Research students).....	82
Section E: Awards .....		90
AWD1	Awards (including calculation of degree classification for taught programmes).....	90
AWD2	PhD on the Basis of Prior Published Works.....	100
AWD3	Posthumous and Aegrotat Awards.....	106

AWD4	Certification of Awards and Supplementary Certification .....	108
AWD5	Academic Dress.....	110
Appendix 1:	Portfolio of Awards .....	113
Appendix 2:	Calculation of Degree Classification for students who completed Level 4 in its entirety before the 2014-15 academic year.....	117

## Section A: Admissions

Admissions to all taught programmes of study at the University are managed under the [admissions policy](#). Admissions to postgraduate research degree programmes are managed under the [Admissions Policy: Research Degrees](#)

### ADM1 Recognition of Prior Learning by Accreditation of Prior Learning

This regulation applies to students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

- 1. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) will only be possible where learning, appropriate to the outcomes of the relevant entry requirements, module(s) or award level, is academically valid.**

The [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#) defines the procedures and guidance for submitting and considering requests for exemption from individual modules or direct entry to the second or subsequent year of a programme based on prior certified and/or experiential learning.

A student seeking specific credit through APCL or APEL may be required to pay a charge as specified on the University's website.

- 2. The maximum amount of credit for prior learning which a student may claim towards a University of Plymouth award, and the minimum credit which must then be studied at the University in relation to specific awards, is:**

	<b>Maximum APCL/APEL credits</b>	<b>Credit that must be studied on a University of Plymouth programme</b>
<b>CertHE</b>	<b>60 credits at level 4</b>	<b>60 credits at Level 4 or above</b>
<b>HNC</b>	<b>60 credits at level 4</b>	<b>60 credits at Level 4 or above</b>
<b>DipHE</b>	<b>120 credits at level 4 or above</b>	<b>120 credits, including at least 60 at Level 5 or above</b>
<b>Foundation Degree</b>	<b>120 credits at level 4 or above</b>	<b>120 credits, including at least 60 at Level 5</b>
<b>HND</b>	<b>120 credits at level 4 or above</b>	<b>120 credits, including at least 60 at Level 5</b>
<b>Degree</b>	<b>240 credits, of which at least 120 must be at level 5 or above</b>	<b>80 credits, including at least 60 at Level 6</b>
<b>Honours Degree</b>	<b>240 credits, of which at least 120</b>	<b>120 credits, including at least 60 at Level 6</b>

	<b>must be at level 5 or above</b>	
<b>Integrated Masters Degree</b>	<b>240 credits, of which at least 120 must be level 5 or above</b>	<b>240 credits, including at least 120 at Level 6 or above</b>
<b>Grad Cert</b>	<b>30 credits at level 6</b>	<b>30 credits at Level 6 or above</b>
<b>Grad Dip</b>	<b>60 credits at level 6</b>	<b>60 credits at Level 6 or above</b>
<b>PgCert</b>	<b>30 credits at level 7</b>	<b>30 credits at Level 7 or above</b>
<b>PgDip</b>	<b>80 credits at level 7</b>	<b>40 credits at Level 7 or above</b>
<b>Masters (standard taught masters e.g. MA, MSc, etc.)</b>	<b>120 credits at level 7</b>	<b>60 credits at Level 7 (including the major project or dissertation)</b>
<b>MArch</b>	<b>120 credits at level 6 or above</b>	<b>120 credits, including at least 60 credits at Level 7</b>
<b>MFA</b>	<b>120 credits at level 7</b>	<b>120 credits, including at least 60 credits at level 7</b>
<b>Professional Doctorate</b>	<b>120 credits at level 7 or above</b>	<b>420 credits at level 8, including the research element of the programme</b>

Students with prior credits awarded by University of Plymouth should be treated the same as students applying with prior credits from other Higher Education institutions.

A student may claim Accreditation for Prior Certified Learning (APCL) credit from CPD short courses as well as from named awards.

**3. Decisions on the award of credit are a matter of academic judgement, and are therefore final.**

The procedure for making an APCL or APEL claim is set out in the [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).

**4. Recognition of credit for prior certificated learning which occurred more than five years prior to the intended start date of the intended programme will not be awarded.**

Some subject areas may accept only credits awarded more recently than the five-year deadline. This will be set out in the Programme Handbook.

A student may be able to combine outdated (i.e. more than five years prior) certificated learning with more recent experiential learning. In this case, the certificated learning should be considered as part of an APEL claim.

**5. Applications for programme credit (credit for earlier stages of a programme) should be made as part of the admissions process prior to registration on a programme.**

**Applications for module credit (credit for a specific module) should be made prior to registration on a module, but may exceptionally be accepted within two weeks of the start of the module.**

**Evidence to support a module credit claim must be submitted by halfway through the module or within 30 days of the application (whichever is the earlier).**

Applications for programme credit received more than four weeks after the start date of the intended programme will not be accepted.

Selected medical, dental or veterinary students can apply to take an intercalated degree at the University. Admissions decisions for these students will be considered as applications for programme credit, especially where the receiving programme is outside the student's immediate discipline area.

A claim for APCL programme credit will not normally be awarded with numerical marks attached unless the University is familiar with the marking scheme and academic standards of the credit-awarding institution. The consequent effect on the calculation of final aggregate marks, as set out in [AWD1](#), should be made clear in writing to students when the University accepts the prior credits.

A claim for APCL module credit will not normally be approved with marks attached unless a student can demonstrate that:

- a) the learning was directly applicable to the module against which the claim was being made; and
- b) the University was familiar with the marking scheme and academic standard of the credit-awarding institution. In such cases where marks are transferred, they will be used to calculate the final aggregate percentage mark in the proportions shown in AWD1

**6. APEL claims are subject to the normal academic regulations governing the marking and successful completion of a module.**

A student who has submitted an assessment for an APEL claim that does not meet the required learning outcomes will either be offered the opportunity to submit an appropriate piece of referred coursework for the module(s), or, exceptionally, the Award Assessment Board may require the student to repeat the module with attendance as a further attempt.

Claims for APEL will be examined in line with the standard quality assurance procedures, including external examining where appropriate.

- 7. Where APCL/APEL has been awarded, this must be recorded and clearly identified in all papers considered by Subject Assessment Panels and Award Assessment Boards, and in the student transcript.**

- 8. The Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee may allow a student who has started a programme of study and research at another university to complete it as a registered student of the University of Plymouth.**

The Doctoral College shall decide the minimum and maximum periods of study and research allowed on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the research student's previous institution.

- 9. The University reserves the right to reject an APCL/APEL claim based on academic judgement and the comparability of marking systems.**

## Section B: Student Registration and Enrolment

### SRE1 Registration and Enrolment

This regulation applies to students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved. Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their registration, enrolment and progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

**1. A student can be registered only on programmes of study that add up to the equivalent of one full-time programme of study at any one time.**

A student may be registered on more than one part-time programme of study, as long as:

- a) the combined part-time programmes add up to no more than the equivalent of one full-time programme.
- b) the work undertaken and / or the credits awarded contribute to only one of the programmes the student is registered on (unless specifically required or approved by the University through the programme approval process).

The only exception to the above is when a student registered on a full-time postgraduate research degree programme is required to take postgraduate taught modules as a compulsory part of that research degree, or when these taught modules have been approved in advance by their Director of Studies.

**2. All students must register at the beginning of their programme of study and enrol subsequently as required.**

Students studying taught programmes who have not enrolled within 4 weeks of the start of the academic year will be withdrawn by the Faculty/partner institution.

#### Taught Programmes

**3. All repeat years (even if taken as a same attempt), and all periods of interruption, extension, or disciplinary suspension will count towards the maximum period of registration permitted.**



**4. If a programme is more than one year long, the maximum period of registration allowed is the planned length of the programme plus three years, with an absolute maximum of ten years.**

**If a programme is one year long, the maximum period of registration allowed is three years for full-time students and five years for part-time students.**

The maximum period of registration allowed for a student on a three-year Honours degree, for example, will be six years (the three-year programme plus three years).

Programmes leading to registration with a professional body may have shorter maximum periods of study. This will be set out in the relevant Programme Handbook.

All students must be able to demonstrate currency of knowledge. If a student on a work-based learning programme requires longer than the standard maximum period of registration for part-time students, due to the needs of the workplace, they should apply for this at the beginning of the stage, as appropriate, through the [Accreditation of Prior Learning](#) process.

**5. For UPIC students, the period of registration starts at the point of enrolment on Stage 1 of the integrated programme.**

**6. Ordinary Degree students should complete any Honours top-up within the normal maximum period of registration as set out in 3 above.**

**7. Students entering the University to complete a top-up year should complete the award within a maximum of three years.**

In exceptional circumstances, at the University's discretion, a further extension of 12 months beyond the normal maximum period of registration can be granted. If a student needs to extend the maximum period of registration, they must submit a written application to the Faculty Business Manager (or nominee), explaining why the extension is needed. The application must include a letter from the Programme Leader to confirm that the Programme Leader supports the application for extension, and that the student is expected to complete the programme within the extended period.

The Faculty Business Manager (or nominee) is authorised to approve or reject a request for extension.

**8. All new students are expected to attend University induction week (or the equivalent induction programme of events in a Partner institution).**

**9. Students who want to withdraw from a module must tell the Faculty Office in writing before 50% of the teaching on the module has been completed.**

If a student does not tell the Faculty Office in writing that they want to withdraw from a module before 50% of the teaching on that module has been completed, and then does not complete the module, they will have failed the module.

Students who withdraw from a module after 50% of the teaching has been completed will not be allowed to start another module in the same semester.

A final stage honours degree student who wants to withdraw from a year-long project/dissertation module must tell the Faculty Office in writing by the end of the first term after the start of the module. A student who does not do so, and then does not present themselves for assessment, will have failed the module.

**10. A student may interrupt their registration for a period of time, with the intention of resuming their studies.**

A student who wants to interrupt their studies should first discuss this with their Personal Tutor or Programme Lead to make sure that this is the best course of action for the student.

A student who wants to interrupt their studies should be aware that there is a [maximum period of time](#) in which they must complete their award.

A student who wants to interrupt their studies should be aware that they will also be withdrawing from any modules on which they are enrolled at that time. Students should be aware that if they interrupt their studies after 50% of teaching on the module has been completed, this will count as an attempt at that module, and their module marks will be capped at the pass mark when they return unless they have approved [extenuating circumstances](#).

An interrupted student can continue to access University facilities such as the library and computing account during the period of interruption, although the University retains the right to withdraw this access if necessary.

The University reserves the right, in certain circumstances, to require a student to interrupt their studies for a period of time. Such circumstances may include, *inter alia*, a decision

under the [Study and Wellbeing Review policy](#), or a situation in which a Faculty has been unable to secure a placement for a student on a professional programme

Before a student who has interrupted their studies can enrol to resume their studies, their readiness to return to study will be assessed. If a student has been interrupted under the [Study and Wellbeing Review Policy](#) the return to study assessment will be as per the process described in that policy. If a student has been interrupted for any other reason the Faculty or partner institution will decide what form the assessment will take. This may include a telephone call/email correspondence/formal meeting. As a result of this assessment, the University may refer the student to other policies, including the [Study and Wellbeing Review Policy](#).

**11. A student has the right to withdraw from a programme of study at any point during the academic year. Where a student withdraws from a programme, they will be awarded credit for any modules completed successfully before the date of withdrawal, but will not be allowed to complete any assessment after the date of withdrawal.**

**12. A student who has withdrawn from a programme and later wants to re-join the programme will be required to re-apply.**

#### Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes

**13. All students must enrol at the beginning of their programme of study, and must continue to enrol each academic year until the examination process has been completed. Any student who has not enrolled for the current academic year without a formal interruption, approved by the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee, will have their registration automatically terminated and their status will be recorded as withdrawn.**

**14. The first six months of registration for full-time students and twelve months for part-time students are considered a probationary period and registration may be terminated by the University if the research student does not make sufficient progress during this time (normally indicated by not successfully completing the Project Approval RDC.1 milestone).**

**15. The maximum and minimum periods of supervised study and registration for a research degree are:**

<b>Registration type</b>	<b>Mode of Attendance.</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum (including writing- up)</b>
<b>ResM</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>1.5 years</b>
	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>2 years</b>	<b>3 years</b>
<b>MPhil</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>3 years</b>
	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>2 years</b>	<b>4 years</b>
<b>PhD</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>2 years</b>	<b>4 years</b>
	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>3 years</b>	<b>6 years</b>
<b>MD</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>3 years</b>
	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>2 years</b>	<b>4 years</b>
<b>Professional Doctorates – comprised only of credit rated modules</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>3 years</b>	<b>4 years (No writing up period)</b>
	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>5 years</b>	<b>6 years (No writing up period)</b>
<b>Professional Doctorates – comprised of 360 credits of research element outside of credit-rated modules</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>3 years plus 1 year writing up</b>	
	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>5 years plus 1 year writing up</b>	

A Professional Doctorate may be studied in full time or part time mode, or a combination of both.

The period of registration for a Professional Doctorate may be extended by one academic year if it additionally includes time working in/with industry.

The taught element of a Professional Doctorate will normally last one academic year if studied full-time and normally two academic years if studied part-time. A student may be registered on the taught element of a Professional Doctorate for no more than one further year over and above the normal duration.

**16. Students registered on a Professional Doctorate programme who wish to withdraw from a taught module must notify the Faculty Office of their intention in writing by the end of the sixth week after the commencement of the Professional Doctorate programme in the academic year in which that module was due to be taken**

A student registered on a Professional Doctorate programme who does not formally withdraw from a taught module and subsequently does not complete the module will be deemed to have failed the module.

Students who withdraw from a module at this stage will not be allowed to start an alternative module in the same term

**17. Students registered on a Professional Doctorate programme who wish to withdraw from the research element of the programme must notify the Doctoral College in writing by the date indicated in the programme handbook.**

A student registered on a Professional Doctorate programme who does not formally withdraw from the research element and subsequently does not present themselves for assessment, will be deemed to have failed the research element.

**18. All periods of disciplinary suspension and approved extensions will count towards the maximum period of registration allowed. A period of voluntary interruption will not count towards the maximum period of registration allowed.**

The period of registration for a research degree ends when the thesis is submitted for examination. A student's enrolment will cease as soon as the programme has been completed.

Students should refer to the [Research Degrees Handbook](#) for further information on permitted periods of registration, and writing-up status.

**19. Where the student can demonstrate compelling personal reasons for not making progress with the research programme, their registration may be interrupted for a period of not less than one month and not more than 12 months.**

**In exceptional circumstances, a student may renew the interruption of registration once, for a further period of 12 months maximum.**

Students are normally not allowed to interrupt prior to their submission of Project Approval materials.

During the period of interruption, the supervisory team is not obliged to engage with the student about the progress of their project.

**20. In exceptional cases, and on the recommendation of the Director of Studies (or other nominated supervisor), a student's registration may be extended by the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee for a maximum of 1 year at any one time and a maximum period of 2 years in total (including extensions and interruptions).**

The registration of a student for whom the maximum period of registration has ended, and for whom no further extension has been granted, may be deemed by the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee to have lapsed and will be automatically withdrawn.

## **SRE2 Student Transfers**

This regulation applies to students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved. Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

This regulation applies to:

- The external student transferring in to a University of Plymouth Faculty (or partner institution); or
- The internal student transferring to another programme within University of Plymouth. This could be within the same school, in another school within a faculty or partner institution, or to another faculty

Separate arrangements are in place for students moving from an HND or Foundation Degree into the final year of a degree programme, where this is part of a formal agreement within the University or between the University and a partner institution.

Separate arrangements are in place for students moving from one research degree to another (e.g. MPhil to PhD) as part of the [Confirmation of Route](#) progression process.

Students transferring out of University of Plymouth, into another institution, should refer to the [withdrawal process](#).

## **SRE2.1      Transfer into the University or partner institution, from an external institution (taught programmes).**

This regulation applies only to students who want to transfer into the University or partner institution from an external institution, or who wants to transfer to another Faculty within the University.

Transfer from a Foundation Degree to an Honours Degree, or from [one research degree to another](#) is considered to be a progression issue, and are covered by separate procedures.

- 1.      Transfers into the University or partner institution from an external institution should take place within the first two weeks of the first teaching term.**

Late transfers may be allowed at the discretion of the Programme Leader, but may depend on the assessment requirements of the programme. Late transfer into a programme is high risk, and the student must be warned in writing that they will not subsequently be able to use this as the basis of any claim for extenuating circumstances or an appeal.

- 2.      Applicants must ensure that they discuss any queries relating to qualifications and programme stage, recognition of credit for previous study, or calculation of degree classification with the Admissions Officer/ Programme Leader**

- 3.      The final offer of a transfer place, with any terms and conditions, is binding and cannot be changed once the student has started at the University or partner institution.**

All decisions on transfers into the University should be confirmed by academic Admissions Officers / Programme Leaders, including any previous study to be recognised through the University's [accreditation of prior learning regulations](#), and any special arrangements (for example how the final degree will be calculated) required. Academic Admissions Officers / Programme Leaders must make sure that

- the qualifications are appropriate (and meet any external accreditation requirements); and
- appropriate resources are available to support the transfer.

The transferring student will receive a letter from the Recruitment & Admissions Office to confirm that there is a place and any special recognition/arrangements. This letter will go on the student's file.

## **SRE2.2 Internal transfer within the University, to another Faculty or partner institution (taught programmes)**

- 1. Internal transfers, from Faculty to Faculty, are not an automatic right but are subject to:**
  - **a student fulfilling the entry requirements for the programme (including any credit transfer arrangements);**
  - **any accreditation requirements; and**
  - **places being available on the programme.**

- 2. Transfers can take place either within the first two weeks of the first teaching term, or at the end of the academic year after the assessment results have been confirmed.**

Late transfers may be permitted at the discretion of the Programme Leader of the receiving programme, but may depend on the assessment requirements of the programme.

Module choice may be more restricted for students transferring to another programme as the timetabling will normally have occurred before the transfer takes place. A statement to this effect should be included in the University Student Handbook, on the portal and in Programme Handbooks.

All Faculties must use the appropriate transfer form.

Arrangements for internal transfers will normally be dealt with by the Programme Administration team.

A student must discuss and confirm the requests for transfer with both their current Programme Leader and the Leader of the programme to which they are transferring. The transfer will not be complete until all the paperwork is signed off by the relevant academic managers. The student will receive a letter from the Faculty Office confirming that the transfer has been allowed, and setting out any specific issues regarding the transfer arrangement.

Students must be reminded that they may need to discuss the potential implications of their transfer with their appropriate funding body (SFE, NHS, other sponsor, parent, etc.) as there may be financial implications associated with the transfer.



- 3. Repeat students transferring within a programme scheme and/or subject area will retain their repeat status.**

**A repeat student who transfers programme will carry forward the number of attempts they have already had at a failed module, regardless of whether they replace a failed module with a different module.**

- 4. Repeat students transferring outside their original programme scheme and/or subject area will keep their repeat status unless they are taking 60 or more new credits, in which case the 60 credit rule will be initiated (see [AST5.2.4](#)).**

- 5. A transfer will be allowed only where a repeat student is able to complete their studies within the standard period of registration for their programme of study.**

### **SRE2.3 Incoming and outgoing student transfers (research degrees)**

- 1. A student who has started a programme of study may, due to a change in circumstances, request to transfer registration to another institution.**

**The University has the right to refuse the transfer of the registration to another institution. If the University refuses the transfer, the University will explain why the refusal has been made.**

- 2. If a student wants to transfer into University of Plymouth from an external institution, the institution from which the student is transferring must provide written confirmation that they are willing to accept the transfer of the registration for the student.**

**The University has the right to refuse the transfer of the registration from another institution. If the University refuses the transfer, the University will explain why the refusal has been made.**

## **SRE3      Registering for the Ordinary Degree Route / Top-up to Honours**

### **SRE3.1.      Registering for the Ordinary Degree Route**

- 1.      A student has the right to choose to register for the Ordinary Degree route. The student will be restricted to taking a maximum of 80 level 6 credits.**

A student registering for the Ordinary Degree route will be required to complete an application form so that the decision can be formalised.

The student must make sure that the form is signed by the Programme Leader and Faculty Registrar and submitted to the Faculty Office. The form must be submitted either:

- before the student starts the Final Stage of the programme, or
- by the end of Week 4 of the teaching year for the Final Stage (the University deadline for withdrawal from modules of one semester's duration)
- or by the end of the first term (the University deadline for withdrawal from year-long modules/ projects/dissertations).

The deadline for submitting the form will depend on the modules from which the student is withdrawing. The Faculty Office will be able to advise which deadline applies.

- 2.      A student who follows the Ordinary Degree route initially will be entitled to the award of a degree upon satisfactory completion of 80 level 6 credits, and will be issued with a degree certificate.**

- 3.      Part-time students accumulating credits can apply to exit with an Ordinary degree once they have achieved 80 credits.**

### **SRE3.2      Application to top-up an Ordinary Degree to an Honours degree.**

- 1.      A student on the Ordinary Degree route has the right to apply to complete the programme credits needed for the award of an Honours degree and, thus, to 'top-up' to Honours.**

A student on the Ordinary Degree route who wants to top-up to Honours will be required to complete the application form, available from Faculty Offices, which will require approval by the Programme Leader and Faculty Registrar. Each individual faculty will decide, and

advertise in the Programme Handbook, the appropriate timing for this, so that a student can be invited to attend any sessions on project preparation for the coming academic year.

- 2. A student on the Ordinary Degree route who has completed the degree and left the University, and who later wants to request to top-up to Honours, will need to reapply for admission to the programme.**

Entry to the top-up will normally be approved only if it falls within the student's original [maximum period of registration](#). The Faculty will also need to consider carefully the currency of modules already taken.

- 3. A student who has failed the normal Honours programme will not be able to follow the top-up route.**

This will be tracked by Faculty administration.

- 4. A student who is allowed to top-up to Honours will be entitled to the award of an honours degree upon satisfactory completion of a total of 120 Level 6 credits. The student will be issued with a second degree certificate recording their honours classification.**

A student who follows the Ordinary Degree route and later tops-up to Honours will automatically receive an invitation to attend an awards ceremony to celebrate their achievement at each stage.

## Section C: Studying

### SDY1 Programme structure

This regulation applies to students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved. Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from the [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

- 1. Academic study for taught programmes, and for taught elements of research degree programmes, will be organised into modules, set out in terms of credits. Modules are normally 20 credits, although sizes may vary from 15 (postgraduate) or 20 (undergraduate) to 60 credits.**

**A credit rated module with a Professional Doctorate programme cannot exceed 180 credits.**

Exceptionally, modules of 10 credits, normally delivered within one term/semester are allowed, but they must be justified in the approval documentation, discussed and agreed at the approval event and be approved as a non-standard format by the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee and the University Teaching, Learning and Quality Committee.

Any variation in module credits, other than modules included within the Professional Development Framework and co-curricular modules (e.g. Learning Through Volunteering/Student Ambassador Modules, each currently 5 credits at Level 4) will require exceptional approval by the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee.

- 2. The Level of a module is determined by the standard of work required to achieve the objectives of the module.**

#### Undergraduate programmes

- 3. The standard programme structure for an undergraduate award consists of a number of Stages, each of which is made up of 120 credits.**

A Stage is equivalent to one year of study for a full-time student.

**4. A student may not study more than 120 credits in any one session without the specific consent of their programme leader. A full-time student may study no more than 140 credits in one session. A part-time student may study no more than 80 credits in one session.**

**5. The credit weighting of undergraduate awards is:**

<b>a. Certificate of Higher Education</b>	<b>120 credits at Level 4 or above</b>
<b>b. Diploma of Higher Education</b>	<b>240 credits, of which at least 120 are at Level 5 or above</b>
<b>c. Higher National Certificate</b>	<b>A minimum of 120 credits at Level 4</b>
<b>d. Higher National Diploma</b>	<b>240 credits of which at least 120 are at Level 5</b>
<b>e. Foundation Degree</b>	<b>A minimum of 240 credits of which at least 120 are at Level 5</b>
<b>f. Ordinary Degree</b>	<b>320 credits of which 80 are at Level 6 and a further 120 at Level 5 or above</b>
<b>g. Honours Degree</b>	<b>360 credits of which at least 120 are at Level 6, and a further 120 at Level 5 or above</b>
<b>h. Integrated Master's Degree</b>	<b>480 credits. At least 120 credits must be at Level 7, 120 credits must be at Level 6, and a further 120 credits at Level 5 or above</b>
<b>i. Graduate Certificate</b>	<b>A minimum of 60 credits at Level 6 or above</b>
<b>j. Graduate Diploma</b>	<b>A minimum of 120 credits at Level 6 or above</b>

Some Faculties may offer programmes at Level 0. These programmes will follow the standard undergraduate regulations, unless otherwise stated.

An HNC award may comprise a mixture of Level 4 and 5 credits only if it is industry-aligned and is not designed for progression to further study, particularly at Level 6.

A student registered for an Ordinary Degree may not take more than 80 credits at Level 6.

Some four-year undergraduate programmes may require completion of up to 480 credits.

The MArch programme consists of 120 Level 6 credits and 120 Level 7 credits.

A Graduate Certificate/Diploma may include modules at Level 7. Note also that admission to a Graduate Certificate/Diploma requires an undergraduate degree or equivalent.

The title(s) of the award(s) available within an undergraduate programme are specified in the appropriate programme definitive documents.

**6. New students will complete their module choices by the end of the first teaching week of the semester.**

**Continuing students will complete module choices before the end of the previous University teaching year.**

Students should inform the Faculty of any changes to module choices by the end of the first week of each semester. Enrolment on a new module will be approved only if:

- there are no timetable clashes; and
- the new module has capacity.

#### Postgraduate Taught Programmes

**7. The credit weighting of postgraduate taught awards is:**

<b>Postgraduate Certificate</b>	<b>a minimum of 60 credits</b>
<b>Postgraduate Diploma</b>	<b>a minimum of 120 credits</b>
<b>Masters (including MRes)</b>	<b>a minimum of 180 credits</b>

**8. Modules contributing to a postgraduate award will normally be Level 7.**

The Level of each module will be approved at the time of approval and in accordance with University guidelines.

- 9. Masters programmes will include a major project or dissertation module worth at least 40 credits, unless a non-standard regulation has been approved.**

The major project or dissertation module will involve sustained, independent and individual study, normally having some research basis. This may require students to study over the Summer vacation.

The dissertation module for an MRes programme will normally be worth at least 100 credits.

#### Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes

- 10. Research students can be registered for the degree of:**

**(a) ResM - Research Master**

**An 18-month full-time (including 6 months writing up period) or 3 year part-time (including a 1 year writing up period) research degree. Must include a minimum of 40 credits of taught modules at Level 7 (specified in offer letter). According to individual needs, further credits up to a total maximum of 120 credits are permitted within a ResM. A ResM student can transfer to the PhD programme if specific conditions are met (See [AST8.2](#)) and upon the successful completion of the Confirmation of Route process. If this is the case, the total registration period is indicated in (d) below. If a student transfers and continues to PhD, then the ResM degree will not be awarded. Students who do not complete either a ResM or PhD may be eligible for a PGCert or PGDip based on the completion of their taught modules.**

**(b) MPhil - Master of Philosophy**

**A 3 year full-time or 4 year part-time research degree (including a 1 year writing up period for full-time or part-time students).**

**(c) PhD – Doctor of Philosophy**

**A 4 year full-time (including a 1 year writing up period) or 6 year part-time (including 2 years writing up period) research degree**

**(d) MD – Doctor of Medicine**

**A 3 year full-time or 4 year part-time research degree at doctoral level available with the Peninsula Medical School for qualified doctors registered with the GMC and working in a clinical setting within the U.K (including a 1 year writing up period).**

**MD students can exceptionally apply to continue direct to the second year of a PhD upon the successful completion of the Confirmation of Route process. If a student transfers and continues to PhD then the MD degree will not be awarded.**

**(e) Professional Doctorate - Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy).**

**A 3 year full time (not available as part time) research degree.**

**(f) Professional Doctorates (DBA, EdD, EngD).**

**A 4 to 7 year full-time or part-time research degree, (including an initial set of taught level 8 modules, depending on the programme).**

The standard academic year for students registered on a Professional Doctorate will be 48 weeks.

**11. The credit weighting of a Professional Doctorate is 540 credits in total, of which 420 credits must be at level 8.**

Where an accrediting professional body requires an alternative programme structure, exceptions must be approved at the time of validation.

**12. The research element of a Professional Doctorate will normally comprise 360 credits at level 8**

This may take the form of credit-rated modules, or else the equivalent outside the modular structure/system, or a combination of both.

Research elements outside credit-rated modules can be assessed by thesis only. Where all research elements take place within credit-rated modules, at least one module, normally the final 'summative' module, should be 180 credits and scheduled within a single academic year.



**13 The taught element of a Professional Doctorate must take place within taught credit-rated modules only, unless it additionally includes time working in/with industry.**

The taught element of a Professional Doctorate will normally last one academic year if studied full-time and normally two academic years if studied part-time.

**14. At least 180 credits of a Professional Doctorate must comprise of taught credit-rated modules, of which at least 60 credits must be research skills and methodological training, with 30 of those 60 credits being specialist or discipline-specific.**

If there is a professional imperative or requirement for additional taught elements, these may exceed 180 credits, up to a maximum of 270 credits. That is, the credit value of the taught element can never exceed the research element.

Up to 120 credits of the taught credits may be at level 7 and may be shared with other programmes.

The taught credit-rated modules should normally be scheduled in year 1 (full-time) or years 1 and 2 (part-time)

**15. A student may not proceed to the research element of the programme unless they have passed all the taught modules**

**16. Research Project Approval on a Professional Doctorate programme must take place within a level 8 credit-rated module (minimum of 20 credits)**

If the module also includes taught elements, it may be included within the minimum of 180 taught credit-rated modules but must be in addition to the 60 credits of research skills and methodological training.

If the module includes no taught elements (besides introductory session and supervisory guidance) or formative assessments, it may be considered part of the research element of the programme

**17. The taught element of any postgraduate research degree will be managed through the regulations relating to postgraduate taught degrees.**

**18. All research degree students shall have at least two supervisors, and not normally more than three in total. Professional doctorate students may have only a single supervisor and/or personal tutor during the taught element of their programme of study.**

**One of the supervisors shall be nominated as the Director of Studies. The Director of Studies shall be either a member of the academic staff of University of Plymouth, an approved member of the NHS who holds an associated University of Plymouth contract, or an approved member of staff subject to a partnership agreement.**

Full details of the respective responsibilities of students, supervisors and Directors of Studies are set out in the [Research Degrees Handbook](#)

## **SDY2 Work Placements**

This regulation applies to taught students undergoing placements at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from the [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

The different types of placements are defined in the [glossary](#).

**1. While on placement, students are required to follow the University regulations, policies and procedures, and are also bound by the contract of the employer.**

In the unlikely event of a conflict between the University regulations and the employer's requirements, students should seek immediate advice from the Faculty about how to proceed.

Students should be aware that they remain bound by the [Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary procedures](#) while on placement.

**2. The required length of a work placement for any named award will be set out in the programme documentation.**

**3. If the placement lasts at least 26 full-time weeks (or the equivalent industry standard, as set out in the Programme Handbook), in uninterrupted blocks of at least 12 full-time weeks, students who successfully complete at least 26 weeks of the placement will be awarded a Certificate with one of the following titles:**

**Certificate of Professional Experience  
Certificate of International Professional Experience  
Certificate of Work Experience**

**A student who successfully completes 12-25 weeks of placement in uninterrupted blocks of at least 12 full-time weeks should confirm details of the placement completed with the Placements Team. If the Placement Tutor confirms this meets the programme requirements and the relevant placement assessment requirements are met, a Certificate will be awarded with one of the following titles:**

**Certificate of Professional Experience  
Certificate of International Professional Experience  
Certificate of Work Experience**

**The Certificate may be awarded to a student who has or has not successfully completed the relevant programme.**

The Certificate may not be awarded for placements of under 12 uninterrupted weeks.

**4. A student will be expected to have completed successfully the taught credits from their previous year's study before undertaking a placement.**

A student who has failed to complete all taught credits successfully may be allowed to continue with a placement as long as they complete referred assessment or examinations at the same time as all other students. The student should make sure that they are able to return to the University to take any referred examinations at the appropriate time, and employers should be made aware of this requirement.

Placements should not normally start before students are fully aware of any refer/repeat requirements. This will give students the opportunity to consider carefully whether or not to withdraw from a placement if they are required to repeat modules.

**5. The method of assessment of the student's performance on placement must be set out in the programme documentation for the appropriate named award. The placement may be a prerequisite for entry into the subsequent Level but it is not assigned any formal credits.**

**6. Where the placement is a compulsory part of the programme, students who do not complete the placement successfully will be required by the Award Assessment Board to:**

**6.1 repeat the placement with another employer, or,**

**6.2 transfer to a programme without a compulsory placement, if available, or,**

**6.3 withdraw from the programme.**

Withdrawal from the programme should always be a last resort, when all other options have been exhausted.

### **SDY3 Study Abroad / Exchange**

This regulation applies to all taught students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from the [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

The different types of Study Abroad and Exchange placements are defined in the [glossary](#).

Students can go on exchange during any year of their University of Plymouth programme if the programme structure permits. However, students wishing to go on exchange in the final year of their programme should be counselled about the significant weighting of the final year for their degree classification, before making the decision to go on exchange.

**1. For students going to another institution on exchange, the policies and procedures of the host institution will take precedence over those of University of Plymouth while the student is on exchange, where those policies and procedures relate to the individual module or assessment.**

**For students going to another institution on exchange, the policies and procedures of University of Plymouth will take precedence over those of the**

**host institution in relation to a student exchange, where those policies and procedures relate to overall progression and / or award.**

**Incoming exchange students will follow University of Plymouth regulations, and will be treated as University of Plymouth students for the time they are on exchange.**

Policies and procedures relating to the individual module or assessment include extenuating circumstances, late submission of coursework, how to pass a module, religious observance, and examination and academic offences.

Policies and procedures relating to overall progression and / or award rules include how to pass a Level, compensation, referral and repeat, calculation of degree classification, and academic appeal.

Provision may need to be made for incoming exchange students who are required by their home institution to return to their home institution before the end of a module.

- 2. Where a programme requires students to study for a period in a credit awarding institution overseas, credits will be awarded for successful completion of relevant courses approved by the programme team.**

The definitive award documents will set out the number and level of credits to be awarded, the method for agreeing what successful completion is, any contribution of the credits to the award, and any conversion factors applied to the grades/marks.

- 3. If a period of study abroad is optional, the student will be awarded general credit for that exchange year, with all modules taken during the year to be marked on a pass/fail basis. Numerical marks awarded by the host institution will not be used in calculating the final degree classification.**

The weighting for a Level 5 exchange year will be carried forward to Level 6 when calculating the degree classification. For a three-year undergraduate programme, therefore, the weighting will be 1:0:9. For exchanges of one semester, the weighting will be 1:1.5:7.5, where the 1.5 is based on 60 credits at level 5 taken at the University of Plymouth.

## **SDY4 Religious Observance in Teaching, Learning, Research and Assessment**

The University community is committed, where reasonable and practical, to accommodating religious observance on campus and will consider adjustments to working and learning

practices wherever reasonably possible in order to accommodate a more diverse community.

Students who need adjustments to their working and /or learning practices because of religious observance should consult the University's policy on [Religious Observance](#) in Teaching, Learning, Research and Assessment, together with the associated guidance.

## **SDY5      Study and Wellbeing Review**

The University is committed to supporting all students to fulfil their potential. Occasionally a student's circumstances or health may impact upon their own, or others', ability to fulfil that potential. Such cases will be considered under the University's [Study and Wellbeing Review policy](#).

## Section D: Assessment

This section should be read alongside the University [Assessment Policy](#).

Definitions of assessment terms are set out in the [glossary](#).

### AST1 Extenuating Circumstances

This regulation applies to all students taking taught modules at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

This regulation also applies to research degree milestones ('Project Approval' and 'Confirmation of Route') which are, in this context, to be considered 'assessments' – only when extensions have not been agreed by the Doctoral College in advance. See [the Research Degrees Handbook](#) for further explanation and details.

Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from the [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

This regulation should be read alongside the University's [Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures](#), which sets out detailed guidance for students on what may and may not be considered as extenuating circumstances. The document also sets out the procedures that a student must follow when they believe they have extenuating circumstances relating to assessment.

In this section, the word 'University' refers to the Faculty (students on taught modules), the partner institution (for students in partner institutions) or the Doctoral College (for research degree milestones), as appropriate.

- 1. Extenuating circumstances are situations that:**
- **have an impact on a student's ability to attend or complete an assessment or a number of assessments at the usual time, and;**
  - **are outside a student's control**

Consideration of extenuating circumstances ensures that a student is not disadvantaged by these circumstances, while also maintaining academic standards.

All claims of extenuating circumstance will be treated carefully and in confidence.

- 2. The University operates a 'fit-to-sit' policy. If a student believes that their academic performance will be affected by personal or health circumstances, they must submit an extenuating circumstances form, and must not sit the time-specific assessment. If a student sits a time-specific assessment, this will be taken as a declaration that they consider themselves fit to do so, and will count as an attempt.**

A time-specific assessment means an assessment that takes place in a particular time slot, such as an examination, test, presentation or performance.

- 3. If a student believes that their academic performance will be affected by personal or health circumstances, they must submit details to the University on the appropriate form and provide corroborative evidence, where necessary, as soon as possible, and no later than ten working days after the assessment deadline.**

If a student is self-certifying their claim as the circumstances affect them for up to five working days, it is not necessary for evidence to be provided with the appropriate form.

- 4. Claims submitted outside published deadlines will not normally be approved, unless a student can demonstrate an exceptional reason why they were unable to submit their claim at the correct time**

Students should submit their claim to their Faculty Office, partner institution, or the Doctoral College as soon as they can. However, if they want to claim for extenuating circumstances after the formal publication of results at the end of the academic year, this will be dealt with as an appeal against the decision of an Award Assessment Board, please see [AST11](#)

- 5. All claims, other than those that are self-certified, must be accompanied by independent supporting documentation that shows the nature, timing and evidence of the problem, and the effect the problem has had on the student's performance. Supporting evidence should not be retrospective.**

Information on what may be acceptable supporting evidence is available in the [Extenuating circumstances policy and procedures](#).



A student may self-certify extenuating circumstances that affect them for five working days or fewer. Self-certifying means that students must state what their extenuating circumstances are, but they do not need to provide further evidence of the circumstances themselves. As well as describing the circumstances, the University will ask the student to tell us, in their claim, how the circumstances have impacted the student's ability to attend and complete assessments.

- 6. Marks, and decisions regarding postgraduate research degree assessment and progression, will not be adjusted, even if a student has valid extenuating circumstances. Improvement to marks, and successful completion of research degree milestones, can only be achieved by reassessment.**

Details of how extenuating circumstances may be taken into account and the procedure for considering extenuating circumstances claims are set out in the [Extenuating circumstances policy and procedures](#)

- 7. Approved extenuating circumstances claims will not be carried forward automatically to cover future assessments. A student must submit a claim for each assessment affected.**

- 8. Students have the right to appeal the decision made by the University about their Extenuating Circumstances claim. These appeals must be submitted on the appeals form with supporting evidence within ten working days of the University informing the student of the outcome of the extenuating circumstances claim.**

**Appeals against extenuating circumstances decisions can be made only on the following grounds:**

- a The Extenuating Circumstances policy and procedure was not followed correctly.**
- b the decision reached, or the outcome was unreasonable**
- c the claim for extenuating circumstance was not considered properly**
- d new material evidence is available which a student was unable, for good reason, to provide earlier in the process**
- e there is a reasonable perception of bias during the process**

**Appeals will not be considered on the following grounds:**

- a Dissatisfaction with the judgement of the University in its consideration of the Extenuating Circumstances claim,**
- b. Late submission of an application for Extenuating Circumstances, where there are no compelling reasons why the application was made late.**
- c. Late submission of evidence to support an Extenuating Circumstances claim, where there are no compelling reasons why the evidence was submitted late.**

Appeals will be considered through the University's [appeals procedure](#).

- 9. In the case of taught modules, appeals against an extenuating circumstances decision cannot be made once an Award Assessment Board or examining team has made a progression decision. In the case of research degree milestones, appeals against an extenuating circumstances decision cannot be made once academic decisions have been confirmed by the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.**

Students who want to appeal against extenuating circumstances decisions after the Award Assessment Board or Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee meeting has met should follow the University's standard [appeals procedure](#).

- 10. The outcome of any appeal against a University decision in relation to Extenuating Circumstances is final and will not be considered again later as an appeal against the decision of the Award Assessment Board (taught modules) or either examining teams or the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee (PGR).**

## **AST2 Submission for assessment (taught programmes only)**

This regulation applies to all students on taught programmes at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from the [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

- 1. The University will provide clear and transparent assessment guidelines and briefs for each assessment, with clear information on how and when each assessment should be submitted, through programme and module handbooks.**

#### **AST2.1 Late Submission of Coursework**

- 1. Coursework that is assessed with a numerical mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark if it is submitted within the first 24 hours after the deadline date and time.**

**Coursework that is assessed with a numerical mark will be awarded a mark of zero if submitted more than 24 hours late.**

- 2. Coursework that is assessed on a pass/fail basis will be awarded a Fail if it is submitted after the deadline date and time.**

The 24 hours will apply to the next University working day, irrespective of programme term dates.

Some programmes may not apply the '24 hour' rule because of professional, regulatory or statutory body requirements.

Members of academic staff cannot grant extensions to deadlines for submission of coursework. A student who misses a deadline, or believes that they will miss a deadline, due to circumstances beyond their control should submit a claim for extenuating circumstances as set out in Regulation AST1. The student will normally be given a maximum of 10 working days after the original deadline to submit the work. There may be times where, because of the nature of the assessment task, or the time available to provide marks to an assessment panel, a period of more or fewer than 10 days is allowed. Where this is the case, tutors should tell students and the Faculty Office in advance. Coursework that is assessed with a numerical mark will be subject to the same capping procedures as set out in AST2.1.1 if it is submitted within 24 hours after the extended deadline date and time. If it is submitted more than 24 hours after the extended deadline, a mark of zero will be awarded.

This extra period will not normally apply to the resit period for which an absolute deadline is already set, nor to any other deadline date for marks to be considered by Subject Assessment Panels/Award Assessment Boards. The final deadline for submitting the coursework will be confirmed in writing by the Faculty Office.

- 3. Coursework which is submitted after the deadline will be marked but the results will not be published onto the official record until any extenuating circumstances have been considered. Informal feedback may be given on the quality of the work submitted.**

If there are approved [extenuating circumstances](#), the actual result achieved will be entered onto the record and submitted to the Subject Assessment Panel and Award Assessment Board, or PGR examining team.

If the [extenuating circumstances](#) are not approved, the normal penalty for submitting late will be applied, as set out in AST2.1.

#### **AST2.2 Late arrival at a formal examination**

- 1. If a student arrives late to a formal University examination, they will not be allowed to enter the examination room if the examination has been in progress for more than 30 minutes, unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

If a student arrives to an examination late, and is allowed to sit their examination (within 30 minutes of the start), they will not be given extra time at the end of the examination to make up for the time missed at the beginning.

#### **AST2.3 Late arrival at an assessment on a professional programme.**

- 1. Students on programmes leading to professional registration might not be allowed to sit an assessment if they arrive late.**

The decision on whether to allow a student on a professional programme to go into an assessment late will take into account factors such as:

- whether the student's professionalism is being assessed as a competence standard
- the security of the assessment
- the logistics of admitting a student late
- whether allowing a student late admittance will disadvantage any other students.

The relevant Programme or Module Handbooks should state clearly whether or not students will be allowed to take an assessment if they arrive late.

#### AST2.4 Unreadable / inaccessible eSubmission

- 1. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that work is submitted in a correct format and is readable. Work that is submitted in a format other than that requested, or that is found to be unreadable by the marker, will receive a zero mark.**

The assignment brief must state clearly the requirements for eSubmission, including any required file format. If no specific format is requested, the default is that work must be submitted in MSWord, MSEXcel, or pdf format, as appropriate.

#### AST3 How to pass a Level (undergraduate only)

This regulation applies to undergraduate students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from the [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

- 1. A student must pass 120 credits, and any zero credit rated modules if detailed in the Programme Specification, to complete the Level and progress or graduate.**

There may be occasions when a part-time student may need to mix levels of study, due to the needs of the workplace, or operational constraints.

If the needs of the workplace, or operational constraints, make it necessary for a student to mix levels of study, no more than two levels of should be studied at any one time.

- 2. A full-time student must complete a Level before being allowed to progress to the next Level, unless an extended referral has been awarded.**

An extended referral allows a student to progress to the next Level of study while completing referral work in up to 20 credits or one 30 credit module. The student will be required to complete that referral work by the November of the next academic year. It prevents a student from having to repeat a whole year of study, just to pass 20 credits. Further information on extended referral is available in AST5.2 (5), below.

An Award Assessment Board will normally meet at the end of the Summer term and in September. The Faculties will make local arrangements to review the provisional marks of the immersive module at the appropriate time in order to identify those students requiring an in-year referral.

A final year student may be given an extended referral opportunity, which will mean that they can complete referral assessment by the November of the next academic year, without having to attend. The student will then be considered at the next round of assessment Panels and Boards (normally the end of the summer term).

## **AST4      How to pass a module**

This regulation applies to all students on taught programmes at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from the [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

**1.      Students cannot re-take modules that have already been successfully completed.**

**2.      The pass mark for an undergraduate module (Levels 0 and 4-6) is 40%. To pass a module, a student must achieve an overall module aggregate mark of at least the pass mark. Students on HNC/D programmes will, in addition, be awarded grades of Pass (40-59%), Merit (60-69%) or Distinction (70% or over) for all modules.**

In modules with a combination of Pass/Fail and numerically marked elements, a student will be required to achieve a Pass in all Pass/Fail elements, and an overall module mark of 40%.

**3.      The pass mark for a postgraduate Level 7 or level 8 module is 50%. To pass a module, a student must achieve an overall module aggregate mark of at least the pass mark.**

In modules with a combination of Pass/Fail and numerically marked elements, a student will be required to achieve a Pass in all Pass/Fail elements, and an overall module mark of 50%. While Level 7 modules are most commonly found in postgraduate taught awards, undergraduate students should be aware that Integrated Masters programmes will, and Graduate Diplomas might, also include Level 7 modules.

## **AST5 Procedure in the event of failure (taught programmes / modules)**

This regulation applies to all students on taught programmes at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from the [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

### **AST5.1 Compensation**

- 1. Where a student fails one or more taught modules, the Award Assessment Board will normally compensate for the failure, provided that the module mark(s) is/are within 5 marks (postgraduate taught modules) or 10 marks (undergraduate modules) of the pass mark.**

The Award Assessment Board may offer compensation to a student who has valid extenuating circumstances. The student may opt to take a referral instead.

The Award Assessment Board may offer compensation to a final year undergraduate student. The student may opt to take a referral instead if this will allow the student to achieve a higher classification on successful referral.

- 2. The maximum compensation allowed within each award is:**

<b>Undergraduate awards</b>	<b>20 credits per Level</b>
<b>Postgraduate Certificate</b>	<b>0 credits</b>
<b>Postgraduate Diploma</b>	<b>30 credits</b>
<b>Masters Degree</b>	<b>30 credits</b>

Compensation will be considered for undergraduate programmes only at the Award Assessment Board when the full module profile for the Level is known.

A student may be compensated if they have failed up to 60 credits, i.e. the volume of credit permitted for referral.

If the original module mark achieved was below the pass mark, the original mark will remain after compensation.

Compensation cannot be applied for any module where assessments are marked on a pass/fail basis, i.e. no marks are awarded.

Compensation cannot be applied to the in-year referral for the immersive module. Students studying taught modules as part of a postgraduate research degree will not be eligible for compensation.

A part time undergraduate student may be awarded a compensated pass only at the point when the student has attempted 120 credits of a Level.

While there should be no compensation for an individual module taken as accredited CPD, a module taken as accredited Professional Development may be compensated (dependent on the module status) when it contributes to a programme or an award.

## **AST5.2 Referral and repeat**

Definitions of assessment terms such as referral and repeat are set out in the [glossary](#).

- 1. Where a student fails one or more taught modules, including those studied as part of a Professional Doctorate, the Award Assessment Board may:**
  - **award compensation in a maximum number credits, if permitted in [AST5.1](#) above, and make an award based on the aggregate mark achieved.**
  - **allow the student to be referred in the module(s), in whole or in part of each element of assessment, at the next available opportunity; a student may be referred in up to 60 credits (120 credits for an MRes dissertation module).**
  - **allow the student to repeat the module(s), with or without attendance, by a date to be determined by the Board;**
  - **require the student to withdraw from the programme and award any intermediate qualification for which the student has achieved the credit requirements;**
  - **require a student whose extenuating circumstances will prevent the completion of the award during the normal period of registration, or have prevented them from making academic progress in the previous session, to interrupt studies or withdraw from the programme.**
  - **require a student whose extenuating circumstances will prevent them from meeting the learning outcomes of their programme to transfer to an alternative programme, or withdraw from the programme and be granted the appropriate exit or aegrotat award.**



A student who fails the immersive module, and who is required to take a referral, is required to refer only those components which they failed.

A student who fails any other module and is required to take a referral, will normally be required to refer only those element(s) of the module in which they received a mark below the pass mark (40% for Level 0-6 modules; 50% for Level 7 and 8 modules) and/or any Pass/Fail elements which have not been achieved. A student will be deemed to have passed the module after referral / repeat if they have achieved an overall module mark of 40% (Levels 0-6) / 50% (Level 7 and 8) and/or achieved any Pass/Fail elements. The referred module mark will be calculated using the weightings set out in the Module Record, carrying forward the marks from the original element(s) of assessment that were at or above the module pass mark, and using the uncapped marks achieved for any referral work undertaken.

- Where a student has carried out referral work as a next attempt, the overall module mark will then be capped at the pass mark for modules which are numerically marked and those with a combination of Pass/Fail and numerically marked elements.
- If a student is completing referrals with mixed attempts due to valid extenuating circumstances, the element which is referred at the next attempt will be capped and the module mark will be calculated using the uncapped mark for any referral work taken as a first attempt and the capped mark for any element carried out as a next attempt.

A student who fails and is required to repeat a module will normally be required to repeat all elements unless there is, for example, a substantial laboratory/fieldwork element which has been completed to a good standard where timetabling or other logistical problems may otherwise occur. In such cases the Award Assessment Board will set out what is to be retaken.

A student who has already been given a referral opportunity, but is unsuccessful in that referral, will normally be required to repeat the module in its entirety.

The Award Assessment Board should make its decision on whether to compensate or refer an undergraduate student at the final stage based on the student's potential to achieve a higher classification on referral.

A student who fails to submit referred assessment or fails to attend a referral examination will be awarded a mark of zero for that element, and/or fail a Pass/Fail element. Students should consider the likelihood of their success in referred assessments. Students may choose to repeat module(s) instead. If a student chooses to repeat the module(s), they must pay the standard fee and repeat all elements of the module.

The form of the referred assessment does not have to be the same as the form of assessment which was originally failed. It is the responsibility of the Award Assessment Board to specify the form of the reassessment. However, if the form of the reassessment is different (including cases where the nature of the examination or coursework has changed) students should be told in writing, via the student transcript. A student may only be referred in a Co-Curriculum Module (e.g. Learning Through Volunteering/Student Ambassador Modules) if their overall level of failure is within the limits found appropriate by the Award

Assessment Board and described at AST 5.2.3 above. If not, a student may be required to re-take any failed Co-Curriculum Module(s) during the next academic year.

If a student has extenuating circumstances that will prevent them from completing the award during the normal period of registration, or has prevented them from making academic progress in the previous session, the Board decision will be subject to a case conference being held in line with the [Study and Wellbeing Review Policy](#).

The decision to withdraw a student should be an exceptional decision, taken only when it is clearly in the student's best interests, and usually after the opportunity to repeat the failed modules has been applied (unless there are associated Fitness to Practise issues for those students on programmes leading to professional registration).

- 2. Where a student has failed a referred assessment in up to 20 credits (or has failed referred assessment in one 30 credit module), the Board may exceptionally allow the student to progress and an extended referral opportunity during the next session, subject to the number of attempts remaining. This is not intended to provide a further attempt beyond that permitted in AST5.2.6**

A final year undergraduate student may be given an extended referral opportunity, which will mean that they can complete referral assessment by the November of the next academic year, without having to attend. The student will then be considered at the next round of assessment Panels and Boards (normally the end of the summer term).

The Award Assessment Board may determine the form of the reassessment. Where the referral takes the form of coursework, the submission deadline should normally be set for the end of November and, while marks are provisional, feedback should be given to students by the end of the Autumn Term (with academic staff consulting with External Examiners over any borderline marks). This would enable the University to advise students who had failed at their final attempt of their options and, in particular, to give students the opportunity to withdraw by the end of the first week of the following term, thereby avoiding liability for the full year's fees. Referred examinations/fieldwork will normally be taken on the next occasion on which the examination/fieldwork is scheduled.

- 3. Where a student fails the dissertation/major project module, the Award Assessment Board may at its discretion, based on a judgement of the student's overall performance and potential:**
- allow the student to resubmit the work under its original title. The deadline for submission should be no more than twelve weeks from the date of publication of results; or**

- require the student to submit a new dissertation/project, by a date to be determined by the Board; or
- require the student to withdraw from the programme; or
- require a student whose extenuating circumstances will prevent the completion of the award during the normal period of registration, or has prevented them from making academic progress in the previous session, to suspend or withdraw from the programme.

If a programme team does not want dissertation credit to contribute to a Postgraduate Certificate / Diploma, they should request approval of a non-standard regulation.

- 4. Where a student on an undergraduate award is required to take a reassessment, the original rule for passing the module will apply, unless the Award Assessment Board has specified a single module assessment in substitution for both elements, in which case the student must achieve 40% in that assessment.**

**A student on a postgraduate taught award who is being reassessed in an element of assessment must achieve a pass mark in that element. The student will fail the reassessment if s/he does not pass the reassessed elements even if s/he achieves a module mark of 50% (for a level 7 module) or 40% (for a Level 6 undergraduate module). The original rule for passing the module will apply for a student being reassessed in or retaking more than one element of assessment.**

A student who fails the referral or repeat because they have not achieved the overall pass mark in the module, will still be eligible for compensation, as set out in AST5.1, above.

- 5. Where there are valid extenuating circumstances, the Board may allow a student to take referrals in the appropriate assessments at the next available opportunity even if they have failed more credits than can normally be referred. To be eligible for such a referral, students should have shown enough academic progress during the year to suggest that they have the potential to achieve all the credits in which they have been referred.**

If the summer Award Assessment Board requires a final stage student to repeat failed modules under Regulation AST5.2.1, that student can ask for referrals only in the number of credits required to achieve an Ordinary Degree (rather than an Honours degree).

If the student wants to return to the University to “top up” to Honours, they will have to re-apply for admission, normally no less than two years after the award of the Degree. The University’s decision on re-admission will be final.

**6. An undergraduate student starting Level 4 for the first time in 2018-19 and thereafter will be allowed a maximum of two attempts at a module. A failed module may not be referred or repeated on more than one occasion.**

**An undergraduate student who completed Level 4 in its entirety before the 2018-19 academic year, or who is repeating any part of Level 4 as a next attempt in 2018-19, will be allowed a maximum of three attempts at a module. A failed module may not be referred or repeated on more than two occasions.**

**An undergraduate student on the foundation year will be allowed a maximum of two attempts at a module. A failed module may not be referred or repeated on more than one occasion.**

**A postgraduate student will be allowed a maximum of two attempts at a module. A failed module may not be referred or repeated on more than one occasion.**

Where a student has valid extenuating circumstances, a referral or repeat will be offered as a same attempt and will not, therefore, count as an additional attempt towards the maximum number of attempts allowed.

**7. If a student studies a different module instead of the failed module, the number of attempts at the original module will count towards the maximum number of attempts at the new module.**

**8. Where a failed module is successfully referred or repeated, the mark for the referred/repeated module will be capped at the pass mark (40% for Level 0-6 modules, 50% for Level 7 and 8 modules).**

**Marks will not be capped if the referral or repeat is taken as a first attempt.**

The overall module mark will be capped at the pass mark for modules which are numerically marked and those with a combination of Pass/Fail and numerically marked elements.

Where students are transferring to a new programme and/or subject area, and taking a large number of new modules (perhaps 60 credits), Award Assessment Boards may allow

students to be given whatever mark is achieved at the second or final attempt. The reasons for such an exception must be discussed with the External Examiner and recorded in the minutes.

### **AST5.3 Exclusion of a Student on the Grounds of Unsatisfactory Progress (either Academic or in Terms of Professional Development)**

This regulation applies to all taught students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

This regulation should be read alongside the University's [Study and Wellbeing Review Policy](#).

- 1. A student who the Dean (or appropriate Head of a partner institution), considers to be making unsatisfactory progress (either academic or in terms of professional development), or whose conduct is unethical or unprofessional or dangerous, may be required to withdraw from a programme of study.**

If a student demonstrates unsatisfactory progress (either academic or in terms of professional development), a written formal warning will be issued by the Faculty Registrar (or nominee) or HE Co-ordinator or equivalent (Partner Institutions) after consultation with the Programme Leader, setting out the reasons for the warning. If the problem is not resolved, the Dean (or appropriate Head of a partner institution) may require the student to withdraw.

The University will not normally require a student to withdraw from a programme of study unless:

- the University can demonstrate it communicated with the student to monitor academic or professional engagement; and
- the student has not demonstrated that they have addressed the issues raised in that communication.

- 2. Students have the right to appeal against any decision to be withdrawn on the grounds of unsatisfactory progress (either academic or in terms of professional development).**

Appeals will only be accepted if there is evidence of procedural irregularity, bias, or failure to reach a reasonable decision, or if the student submits further material circumstances which could not reasonably have been expected to have been submitted for consideration at the

appropriate time. Guidance on the grounds for appeal and a proforma are available at the [appeals procedure](#). The University aims to respond to any appeal within 20 working days.

## **AST6      Subject Assessment Panels and Award Assessment Boards (Taught programmes / modules)**

This regulation applies to all taught students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

- 1.      The main purpose of Subject Assessment Panels and Award Assessment Boards is to make sure that the underlying principles of assessment at the University have been upheld:**
  - **To provide a fair and reliable measure of students' performance, knowledge and skills against the learning outcomes and discipline pedagogy.**
  - **To give University stakeholders confidence that a student has achieved the necessary level of achievement, giving a reliable and consistent basis for their award.**

- 2.      Subject Assessment Panels (with Subject External Examiners in attendance) are set up to confirm or modify module marks, to review the standard of assessment in the 'subject' and to decide on recommendations on the form of referral for individual modules.**

**The confirmed marks and recommendations are then considered by the Award Assessment Board (with the Award External Examiner in attendance) which makes decisions on the final result for each student on a particular award or group of awards.**

- 3.      For postgraduate programmes, an interim Award Assessment Board must be held at the end of taught modules, with the final Board meeting at the end of the programme, to make decisions on final awards.**

Operational instructions for Subject Assessment Panels and Award Assessment Boards are available [here](#).

1. **The membership of the Panel will be:**
  - **Chair (the subject leader or equivalent),**
  - **Internal Examiners for all subject (or group of subjects) modules,**
  - **the Subject External Examiner(s), and**
  - **the Faculty Business Manager (or HE Administrator in a partner institution) or nominee acting as Secretary to the Panel (non-voting member).**

**The membership for a Panel in a partner institution will also include a representative from Academic Partnerships, normally a Partnership Manager (PM).**

Subject Assessment Panels may be delivered by virtual means and all papers necessary for the Panel to fulfil its responsibilities will be made available electronically. Members of the Panel will be considered “in attendance” if they join the Panel in-person or remotely.

All Internal Examiners must be present at the Panel, this may be in-person or remotely. If, due to unforeseen circumstances, an Internal Examiner is prevented from attending a Panel, they must make sure that they give the Panel written comments on the marks and the standard of assessment in the module(s).

Subject External Examiners are required to be involved with the standards of assessment in all modules which contribute to a final award, and must attend the relevant Panel meetings, this may be in-person or remotely.

2. **The Subject Assessment Panel will consider the results of all modules in the subject, regardless of the programme or award on which the students are registered.**

**The responsibilities of the Panel are to:**

- a) **review the standard of assessment in the subject, and to make sure that appropriate academic standards are maintained at subject level in modules and across centres, as appropriate, including discussion of the data provided on marks distribution for modules,**
- b) **confirm or modify module marks. An Award Assessment Board cannot alter marks once they have been confirmed by a Panel, unless an error is discovered,**
- c) **discuss any problems with assessment (not about individual students),**

- d) make recommendations on the form of referral assessment for individual modules, (including confirmation that the referral assessments meet the learning outcomes with which they are associated), which will be forwarded to the Award Assessment Board by the Chair of the Panel or nominee,**
- e) receive a list of those modules which have been subject to detailed scrutiny by the Subject External Examiner in the current academic year and in the previous two years,**
- f) receive information from the Panels/Committees of Investigation on substantiated examination and academic offences, which must be fully recorded in the notes of the Panel,**
- g) receive the report from the Subject External Examiner(s) for the previous academic year, and any written response/action plan, to ensure that all issues that were raised have been addressed,**
- h) receive a list of those modules for which alternative assessment has been requested and the decision on each (providing a list of all decisions, whether alternative assessment has been agreed or not, will provide a record of where it was concluded inappropriate to amend assessment and more generally facilitate transparency and consistency in decision-making).**

**The Panel does not receive details of extenuating circumstances relating to individual students, and does not consider the overall performance of individual students.**

Issues raised in the annual reports of the Subject External Examiner(s) will be discussed by the staff involved in the Subject Assessment Panel. Discussion may take place at a special meeting of the Subject Assessment Panel or an alternative forum if more appropriate. A written response will then be agreed. If appropriate, the Chair of the Award Assessment Board (or the Head of School) could co-ordinate the responses from Panels to the External Examiner(s).

**3 All discussions of the Subject Assessment Panel must be recorded formally in the minutes.**



1. **The membership of the Award Assessment Board will be:**
  - **Chair (the Head of School or nominee, or a representative of Academic Partnerships, for partner institutions),**
  - **the Chair of each contributing Subject Assessment Panel or nominee,**
  - **the Programme Manager(s) or equivalent,**
  - **the Award External Examiner(s) (for stages where marks contribute to the final award classification),**
  - **the Faculty Business Manager or HE Administrator in a Partner Institution (or Nominee) as secretary to the Board (non-voting member).**

Award Assessment Boards may be delivered by virtual means and all papers necessary for the Board to fulfil its responsibilities will be made available electronically. Members of the Board will be considered “in attendance” if they join the Board in-person or remotely.

The Faculty Business Manager or nominee will normally attend to make sure that the University's Regulations are followed, and that decisions are clear and unambiguous.

Where the Panel and Board are joined into one meeting, the Subject External Examiners must be present for the Panel business, but cannot participate in the Award Assessment Board discussions.

The membership of the Award Assessment Board may be extended to include Subject External Examiners and other Internal Examiners where this is a requirement for professional accreditation. In such cases the membership of the Award Assessment Board must be clearly set out in the current Award definitive document.

The Award External Examiner must be present at the Board, this may be in-person or remotely. If an Award External Examiner is unable to attend an Assessment Board, a replacement appointment will be made by the relevant Dean after appropriate consultation from amongst the other Subject or Award External Examiners.

2. **The responsibilities of the Award Assessment Board are:**
  - a) **To make decisions on progression, if appropriate, and awards for all students registered for the named award(s) for which the Board is responsible.**
  - b) **To ensure that decisions are made fairly and democratically, and that justice is done to the individual student, in line with the appropriate University Academic Assessment Regulations (and any approved modifications for the particular award stated in the programme documentation),**

- c) To make sure that academic standards of student performance are being maintained at award level, based on the reports received from each of the constituent Subject Assessment Panel chairs on the standard of assessment in subjects/modules, and are comparable with similar awards in other UK institutions, in the expert opinion of the Award External Examiner.**
- d) To make sure that all valid extenuating circumstances relating to individual students have been fully taken into account before a decision is reached.**
- e) To report and discuss, where appropriate, any examination or assessment offences and take appropriate action. The Award Assessment Board will accept the recommended penalty unless the wider assessment profile means that the penalty is no longer appropriate (if, for example, a student has committed multiple offences across a programme, the penalty may be increased).**
- f) To receive formally the Award External Examiner's report for the previous academic year, and any written response/action plan, to make sure that all issues that were raised have been discussed.**

**3. The Award Assessment Board may not alter the marks agreed at a Subject Assessment Panel except where there has been an error.**

**4. All discussions of the Award Assessment Board must be formally recorded in the minutes.**

All decisions relating to students with extenuating circumstances, any discussion of cases of examination and assessment offences, and any other instances where a Board has used its discretion, should be recorded in the minutes very carefully.

**5. An Award Assessment Board can approve, on behalf of the University's Teaching, Learning and Quality Committee, the award of degrees, diplomas and certificates attained on completion of taught programmes of study. The Award Assessment Board chair cannot agree standards and, therefore, the phrase 'Chair's Action' should not be used.**

The action which can be taken by Chairs between meetings of the Award Assessment Board should be set out clearly. The Summer Board should, if possible, make decisions for students with outstanding assessments that if 'X' is achieved then 'Y' degree/award will be conferred; such decisions should be clearly recorded in the minutes. Results for such students can then be released if they satisfy the requirements. If 'X' is not achieved there would have to be a meeting of the Award Assessment Board (as a Referred Board), with a membership agreed by the Summer Board.

- 6. The Referred Board will confirm marks, and make decisions on progression and awards.**

The Referred Board is an Award Assessment Board convened to consider the assessment profiles of students who have completed referred assessments.

## **AST7 External Examiners**

- 1. External Examiners must be appointed for all programmes leading to a University award, whether delivered within the University or at one of its partner institutions.**

- 2. External Examiners must meet the University's published criteria for appointment.**

Criteria for the selection and appointment of a subject or award external examiner for a taught award, or taught elements of a postgraduate research award, can be found [here](#). Criteria for the selection and appointment of an external examiner for a postgraduate research award can be found [here](#).

- 3. The University has clearly defined the roles, powers and responsibilities assigned to its external examiners.**

Roles and responsibilities for external examiners for taught awards can be found [here](#).

Roles and responsibilities for external examiners for postgraduate research awards can be found [here](#).

## **AST8 Progression for research degrees (PGR only)**

### **AST8.1 Project Approval**

The following regulations to all postgraduate research students, except where alternative processes are outlined within professional doctorate programmes (Please see relevant programme specifications for details).

- 1. The assessment of the project plan (project approval stage) for a research degree candidate will include:**
  - a. completion and submission of the following by the candidate:**
    - **RDC.1 form,**
    - **a schedule of work leading to the submission of the thesis, and**
    - **any other materials specified by local Research Degrees Management Units (in supplements to the Research Degrees Handbook).**
    - **a Research Data Management Plan**
    - **confirmation of attendance at a University-wide induction event**
  - b. consideration of the academic content and quality of the programme of work to ensure that it is set at the appropriate level and achievable within the limits of the research programme, and according to the submitted schedule of work**
  - c. review of the project by an expert commentator from outside the supervisory team,**
  - d. consideration of the appropriate level of study of the candidate and programme and thus the route of study and qualification aim,**
  - e. consideration of the availability of project resources, research training, supervision for the duration of the programme,**
  - f. consideration of the extent of the relationship with any collaborating establishment and the protection of intellectual property rights and copyright of the final thesis,**
  - g. consideration of the candidate's qualifications/experience and potential,**
  - h. assurance that the candidate and research degree programme meet the requirements of the University Research Degree Regulations,**
  - i. approval of any request for collaborative or jointly-authored submission of final thesis materials (including practice),**

- j. ethical considerations and/or approval if appropriate and not considered before.**

- 2. Full-time students must submit for their Project Approval assessment within 5 months of initial registration. The Doctoral College may approve extensions to this deadline (up to 6 months from initial registration) when requested by the Director of Studies for methodological reasons. This request must be received prior to the deadline.**

**Part-time students must submit materials for Project Approval assessment within 10 months of initial registration. The Doctoral College may approve extensions to this deadline (up to 12 months from initial registration) when requested by the Director of Studies for methodological reasons. This request must be received prior to the deadline.**

**Students registered on a Professional Doctorate programme must submit for their Project Approval assessment before completing the taught element of the programme.**

If a student needs an extension for any other reason (health, personal circumstances etc.), they must request this through the [Extenuating Circumstances](#) process.

- 3. The Project Approval process will be initiated and managed by the Director of Studies, not earlier than 3 months after initial registration for full-time students, or 6 months for part-time students. The process should only be initiated when the student has submitted all materials set out in 1a above.**

See the [Research Degrees Handbook](#) for details of the Project Approval process.

- 4. If a student does not complete the Project Approval assessment successfully, they will have the opportunity to submit for re-assessment within three months of the publication of the result of the first assessment**

The publication of the result of the first assessment is the date the confirmation is sent to the student by GradBook.

- 5. Students who do not successfully complete Project Approval within 9 months full time, or 15 months part time, will be required to withdraw from the programme unless they have valid extenuating circumstances or their submission is under consideration for approval.**

Please note, these regulations set out the normal expectation for the conduct of the Project Approval. Any unforeseen University circumstances that compromise the set deadlines will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

## **AST8.2 Confirmation of Route**

Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from the [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

The purpose of this assessed milestone is to confirm that the student has evidenced satisfactory progress in the research programme to date and that the research provides the basis for a doctoral level thesis of an appropriate standard. The process will allow students to receive objective confirmation that their research direction is sound, the methodologies appropriate and the quality of writing and presentation is satisfactory.

- 1. The Confirmation of Route process is compulsory for all PhD students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery.**

**It is optional for ResM, MD and MPhil students who wish to transfer to a PhD programme.**

**A PhD student may request a transfer to a Masters-level research programme rather than submit material for Confirmation of Route assessment. This request must be accompanied by a plan of work leading to submission of the thesis.**

ResM, MD and MPhil students must explicitly opt in to this process via the submission of material as per AST8.2.2

Faculties/Academic units may have additional discipline-specific requirements which ResM, MD and/or MPhil students must fulfil in order to be eligible to transfer to a PhD programme (for example, a minimum grade average for mandatory taught modules) in addition to passing the Confirmation of Route assessment. Faculties and Academic units must ensure that staff and students adhere to University guidelines and minimum requirements and clearly communicate any specific requirements to them.

The passing of the Confirmation of Route assessment does not confer either a masters level degree or the completion of equivalent credit-bearing modules. Nor is it a guarantee that the student will eventually be awarded a research degree

**2. The Confirmation of Route process includes the submission by the student of a written document, which summarises progress to date and plans for the future, by including the following:**

- the critical and/or systematic review of recent, relevant work in the field(s);**
- up-to-date statements of research aims and questions;**
- an up-to-date plan of research, including a timetable/schedule of work, leading to submission of the thesis;**
- a statement or description of methodology and/or project design, including discussion of how it has been applied to generate findings or outcomes to date;**
- discussion and reflection on progress, findings and research outcomes to date;**
- identification of the originality, insights and/or significant contribution to knowledge that the project will make by the time the PhD thesis is submitted**
- a statement about the status of the Data Management Plan (including ownership, location and storage of data), any relevant ethics approvals, copyright, collaboration and/or intellectual property rights/agreements;**
- a statement of the resources, facilities and/or training required to complete the project within the registration period;**
- in the case of students intending to pursue a jointly-authored thesis submission, a statement outlining the nature and extent of the collaboration and how this will be represented in the final thesis submission**
- if relevant, a plan setting out the publications expected to be produced during the registration period and/or included within the thesis;**
- in the case of practice-research projects within creative arts disciplines, an explanation of the integrated format of the thesis;**
- any other materials or processes specified by Faculties, Schools or Academic Units (in supplements to the Research Degrees Handbook).**

This regulation presents a guideline of minimum expectations. Faculties/Academic units shall determine the specific requirements of Confirmation of Route written submissions, ensuring that these guidelines are met.

Written submissions are usually 10,000–12,000 words in length but may vary according to discipline-specific requirements. These will be published in School supplements to the Research Degrees Handbook.

The written submission must be accompanied by an 'originality report' (e.g. generated by Turnitin).

- 3. The written documents and materials in AST8.2.2 must be submitted by the student, not earlier than 12 months after initial registration for full-time students, or 18 months for part-time students. See the [Research Degrees Handbook](#) for details of this process.**

Students who change mode of study (from full time to part time or vice versa) will have the submission dates recalculated accordingly.

- 4. Full-time students must submit the written document and materials for Confirmation of Route assessment within 15 months of initial registration.**

**Part-time students must submit materials for Confirmation of Route assessment within 21 months of initial registration.**

**The Doctoral College may approve extensions to Confirmation of Route deadlines (of up to 3 months) when requested by the Director of Studies for methodological reasons. This request must be received prior to the original deadline.**

Students may apply, via the extenuating circumstances process, for extensions to these deadlines for personal reasons.

See the [Research Degrees Handbook](#) for details of the submission process.

- 5. The Confirmation of Route submission is assessed by a Panel comprising 3 individuals. Of these, at least one must be a member of the supervisory team and at least one must be external to the supervisory team. External members of the Assessment Panel must be demonstrably active researchers who are able to comment on the appropriateness of the methodology and levels of progress to date within the context, expectations and assessment criteria of a PhD programme.**



**The Panel will be chaired by (one of) the panel member(s) who is external to the supervisory team and who also contributes to the assessment of the submission.**

**The composition of the Panel, including the identification of the Chair, will be determined by the Director of Studies (who may be a member of the Panel).**

The composition of the Panel for a second attempt may differ from that of the first attempt, although normally must retain at least one member of the original Panel.

- 6. Following assessment of the submission as a first attempt, the Panel may recommend one of the following outcomes:**
- a. PASS – the student is confirmed as remaining on the PhD programme, or is able to transfer to a PhD programme (in the case of ResM, MD, and MPhil);**
  - b. FAIL - the student is offered the opportunity to submit for reassessment within three months from the date of the formal notification by the Doctoral College of the outcome of the assessment.**

The Panellists will each assess the submission independently and negotiate the outcome together. In the case of Outcome b, the Panel will document any aspects that it considers were inadequate, and the resubmitted document should address these aspects.

If the Panellists' are unable to come to a unanimous decision, separate report forms will be issued for recommendations to be reported individually. In this situation, the University will either: appoint an additional external Panel member to arbitrate and who will consider the reports of all Panellists before reaching a decision; or, exceptionally, accept the recommendation of one of the external Panel members.

Outcome b will be applied to students who have not been granted an extension and who do not submit the required materials by the deadline.

- 8. Following assessment of the submission as a second attempt, the Panel may recommend one of the following outcomes:**
- a. PASS - the student is confirmed as remaining on the PhD programme, or is able to transfer to a PhD programme (in the case of ResM, MD, and MPhil);**

- b. FAIL - the student is confirmed as remaining on their current programme (in the case of a ResM, MD, and MPhil) or required to transfer to a masters level programme (in the case of a PhD);**
- c. FAIL - the student is withdrawn from a research degree programme at the University.**

If the Panellists are unable to come to an agreed decision, separate report forms will be issued for recommendations to be reported individually. In this situation, the University will either: appoint an additional external Panel member to arbitrate and who will consider the reports of all Panellists before reaching a decision; or, exceptionally, accept the recommendation of one of the external Panel members.

Outcome b will be applied to ResM, MD and MPhil students who have not been granted an extension and who do not submit the required materials by the deadline.

Outcome c will be applied to PhD students who have not been granted an extension and who do not submit the required materials by the deadline.

### **AST8.3 Failure to Progress**

**1. Students who do not pass compulsory taught elements of their programmes of study within the maximum number of attempts allowed will be required to withdraw.**

**2. In the exercise of its academic judgement, the University reserves the right to terminate the registration of a research student in the case of persistent unacceptable progress.**

**3. The University will not require a research degree student to withdraw unless the University has previously given the student a formal written warning about their academic progress, and given the student the opportunity to improve performance within a reasonable time period, i.e. normally a period of months not weeks.**

## AST9 Examination of research degrees (PGR only)

- 1. All research degrees will be assessed by means of a thesis, which must include a written element, and an oral defence (*viva voce* examination).**

Students must present their thesis, and any other required materials, in line with the criteria set out in the [Research Degrees Handbook](#).

- 2. Two examiners must be appointed for the examination of a research degree thesis. At least one of these examiners will be external to the University (the external examiner) and the other will normally be internal to the University, but independent of the research student and their project (the internal examiner).**

**If the student being examined is also a member of staff of the University, two external examiners and a non-examining Chair are required. Under these circumstances, there will not also be an internal examiner.**

**The student being examined must not have been formally advised or supervised during this programme of study by, or had any close association with, either of the examiners.**

**In the case of collaboratively produced joint theses, candidates will be examined together by the same internal and external examiner with a non-examining Chair (except if one or both candidates are staff – in which case two externals will be appointed and supported by a non-examining Chair), normally at the same *viva voce*.**

The criteria for the appointment of the examination team are set out in the [Research Degrees Handbook](#)

The two examiners will each assess the thesis independently, each attend the *viva voce* examination, and negotiate the examination outcome together.

- 3. A non-examining Chair is appointed in the following circumstances:**
  - the student being examined is also a member of staff at the University;**
  - the internal examiner has no PGR examining experience at the University of Plymouth;**
  - the examiners together do not have experience in a total of three UK examinations at the level of the examination;**
  - the *viva voce* examination is being conducted via video-conference;**

- 'reasonable adjustments' have been made or disability has been taken into account in *viva voce* arrangements or conduct;
- the thesis is collaboratively co-authored by two students being examined together;
- either the internal or external examiner (or both) raise concerns about the standard and / or integrity of the thesis in their respective Pre-viva Report; or
- the student has requested a Chair due to address a perception of bias

Discretion will be exercised in deciding whether or not to appoint a Chair to the examining team for candidates with honorary University contracts, or other personal or professional affiliations with the University.

- 4. Examiners may exceptionally request that the candidate make a brief presentation at the *viva voce* examination. The Examiners must give the student at least 10 University working days' notice of a request to make a presentation.**

**Students may exceptionally request to make a presentation at the *viva voce* examination, but this must be requested via the Director of Studies and approved by both examiners at least 10 working days in advance of the *viva voce* examination.**

**Examiners are under no obligation to approve a student's request to give a presentation.**

- 5. Following the examination, the examiners can make one of the following recommendations, based on the [QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#) at the relevant level:**

- a. **Pass: the degree be awarded. The examining team may provide advisory guidance on editorial corrections to the thesis, such as minor typographical or grammatical errors; or**
- b. **Corrections: the thesis is satisfactory in substance, but the examiners have identified shortcomings in the shaping or articulation of the research. Corrections to be made to the satisfaction of one or all of the examiners by six months from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination; or**
- c. **Defer: resubmission allowed. The thesis is unsatisfactory in substance, with shortcomings in the presentation and / or content, and may require further research. The student is permitted to resubmit**

**for the degree (with detailed advice) and be re-examined on one further occasion by twelve months from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination; or**

- d. Compensatory award: the degree for which the research student is examined is not to be awarded but a lower level degree (MPhil, ResM, PgCert or PgDip) or, in the case of Professional Doctorates, and where the individual regulations for each Professional Doctorate allow, an appropriate master level degree be awarded subject to the presentation of the thesis being amended to the satisfaction of the examiners by one month from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination; or**
- e. Fail: the degree not to be awarded and the student not be permitted to be re-examined.**

If unanimous, the recommendation of the examiners will be confirmed to the candidate informally verbally after the *viva voce* examination by the examination team.

If the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, separate report forms will be issued for the decisions to be reported separately. In this situation, the Doctoral College:

- a. will normally appoint an additional external examiner to arbitrate and shall consider the reports of all examiners before reaching a decision; or
- b. may exceptionally accept the recommendation of the external examiner(s).

**6. Formal written confirmation of the outcome of the examination, including the corrections / amendments required, will be issued to the student by the Doctoral College on receipt of the report form(s).**

Where a student chooses to follow any advisory guidance provided with the award of outcome a in regulation AST9.1.5, all editorial corrections must be made to the thesis before submitting the electronic copy to the University repository within the normal timescale, see AST9.14.

If the degree is awarded subject to corrections or amendments (outcome b or d in regulation AST9.5), these must be made and submitted to the Doctoral College by the relevant date, depending on the outcome.

**7. Possible outcomes after the submission of corrections are:**

- a. **Pass: the degree be awarded. The examining team may provide advisory guidance on editorial corrections to the thesis, such as minor typographical or grammatical errors; or**
- b. **Corrections: the thesis is satisfactory in substance, but the examiners have identified shortcomings in the shaping or articulation of the research. Corrections to be made to the satisfaction of one or all of the examiners by six months from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination; or**
- c. **Compensatory award: the degree for which the research student is examined is not to be awarded, but a lower level degree (MPhil, ResM, PGCert or PGDip) or in the case of Professional Doctorates, and where the individual regulations for each Professional Doctorate allow, an appropriate master level degree to be awarded subject to the presentation of the thesis being amended to the satisfaction of the examiners by one month from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination; or**
- d. **Fail: the degree not to be awarded and the student not permitted to be re-examined.**

Examiners must submit a completed Corrections Report Form to the Doctoral College with their recommended outcome. If the corrections are not completed to the satisfaction of the examiner(s) on the first attempt, outcome B should be recommended, with a list of remaining requirements. If the corrections are then submitted for a second time and still not to the satisfaction of the examiner(s), outcome c or d should be recommended.

Where a student chooses to follow any advisory guidance provided with the award of outcome a in regulation AST9.7, all editorial corrections must be made to the thesis before submitting the electronic copy to the University repository within the normal timescale, see AST9.14.

If the degree is awarded subject to corrections or amendments (outcome b or c), these must be made and submitted to the Doctoral College by the relevant date, depending on the outcome.

Failure to submit by the required date will normally result in failure of the award. Any request for an extension to the due date of the corrections must be made in writing to the Doctoral College (supported by the supervisory team) which will obtain the approval of the examiners before deciding on the period of extension.

**8. If a student is permitted to resubmit for re-examination for the award:**

- a. the research student may be required to carry out further research and will require a further *viva voce* examination. The resubmitted thesis will be examined in the same manner as the first submission. However, where all the examiners agree in advance on outcomes (a) 'pass' or (b) 'corrections', the examiners have the option to waive the requirement to hold a second *viva voce* examination. Details of these requirements must be submitted by the examination team to the Doctoral College who will then forward them to the student
- b. A second *viva voce* examination must be held if the examiners agree in advance, after having submitted their independent pre-viva reports, that there is a chance that the resubmitted thesis will be deemed a fail, or offered a compensatory award (see AST9.4.9).
- c. the research student must submit the revised thesis to the Doctoral College office by not later than 12 months from the formal notification of the outcome of the examination.

**9. Possible outcomes after a resubmission are:**

- a. **Pass:** the degree to be awarded. The examining team may provide advisory guidance on editorial corrections to the thesis, such as minor typographical or grammatical errors; or
- b. **Corrections:** the thesis is satisfactory in substance but the examiners have identified shortcomings in the shaping or articulation of the research. Corrections to be made to the satisfaction of one or all of the examiners by six months from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination; or
- c. **Compensatory award:** the degree for which the research student is examined is not to be awarded but a lower level degree (MPhil, ResM, PgCert or PgDip) or in the case of Professional Doctorates, and where the individual regulations for each Professional Doctorate allow, an appropriate master level degree be awarded subject to the presentation of the thesis being amended to the satisfaction of the examiners by one month from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination, or
- d. **Fail:** the degree not to be awarded and the student not be permitted to be re-examined.

Where a student chooses to follow any advisory guidance provided with the award of outcome a, all editorial corrections must be made to the thesis before submitting the electronic copy to the University repository within the normal timescale, see AST9.14.

If the degree is awarded subject to Corrections (outcome b), these must be made and submitted to the Doctoral College by the relevant date. If the corrections are not completed to the satisfaction of the examiner(s), the student will either fail or be offered a lower award on the recommendation of the examining team.

If a research student is awarded a compensatory / lower degree of ResM or MPhil following a PhD, professional doctorate or an MD re-examination (outcome c), the Doctoral College will require:

- a. confirmation in writing from the internal and/or external examiner that corrections, if required, have been made to their satisfaction, as indicated on the report form. Failure to submit by the required date will normally result in failure of the award. Any request for an extension to the due date of the corrections must be made through the Extenuating Circumstances process.
- b. all references to PhD, professional doctorate or MD will need to be changed to ResM or MPhil as appropriate.

**10. If a research student is not awarded a ResM, then they can be awarded either a PgCert or PgDip if they have satisfactorily completed either 60 or 120 Level 7/8 credits respectively.**

Refer to [AWD1.13](#) for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate and [AWD1.15](#) for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma

**11. A research student who fails to submit a corrected or revised thesis by the date set by the examiners, without formal approval, shall be regarded as having failed the examination and the recommendations of the examiners shall lapse.**

**12. A research student is allowed to submit their thesis for a lower award than that for which they are registered (e.g. a student registered on a PhD programme may submit their thesis for an MPhil degree).**

**13. If a student does not submit a thesis, or is not awarded a research degree after examination of the thesis, they may be eligible for an exit award (a PGCert, or a PGDip) for any taught modules completed.**



A Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) may be awarded if a student has achieved modules worth at least 60 credits, of which at least 50 credits must be at level 7 or above.

A Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) may be awarded if a student who has successfully completed the appropriate modules worth at least 120 credits, of which at least 100 credits must be at level 7 or above.

**14. An award will be made only when the electronic copy of the thesis has been submitted to the University repository, and the submission approved by the Doctoral College. Candidates should submit the electronic copy of the thesis within 60 days of the official notice of the outcome.**

**15. The candidate must have paid any outstanding academic related debts to the University before the award is made.**

## **AST10 Examination and Academic Offences (Taught and Research programmes, including Research Misconduct)**

This regulation applies to all students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved. Partner institutions based overseas should note that, while the principles set out in these regulations will be adhered to at all times, there may be some operational differences in the implementation of the examination and academic offences procedures in these institutions due to logistical constraints.

Students subject to immigration control should be aware that there may be additional restrictions on their progression. Information about current Student Visa requirements is available from the [International Student Advice \(ISA\)](#).

The University reserves the right to apply these regulations in cases where an examination or academic offence is identified after a student has left the University (i.e. to individuals who are not currently enrolled). This may lead to a decision by the University to revoke the award made to the former student.

### **AST10.1 Examination Offences – Taught modules**

This regulation should be read alongside the [Assessment Offences and Research Misconduct Procedures](#).

This regulation applies to examination offences occurring in formal University examinations (including postgraduate taught course examinations) and in-class tests.

Students enrolled on a University of Plymouth research degree who are undertaking taught modules as part of their programme of study will also be subject to this regulation for examinations and in-class tests undertaken on these taught modules. Offences involving other assessments of taught modules, the Project Approval process, the Confirmation of Route process, and the thesis or *viva voce* examination will be dealt with under AST10.2.

This regulation, and associated procedures, applies only to those examinations and tests which contribute towards the award of credit or the satisfactory completion of CPD activity (i.e. summative and not formative assessments). On programmes leading to professional registration, alleged offences in formative assessment may also be referred through the full examination offences process and / or Fitness to Practise proceedings.

Where offences are identified in a formative assessment on all other programmes, these should be drawn to the student's attention by the module leader and the student advised of the consequences of committing an offence in a summative assessment. Where a Tutor notices that a student has received such advice on a number of occasions, this may trigger a further discussion.

- 1. The University recognises the following, including any attempt to carry out the actions described, as examination offences, regardless of intent:**
  - a. Possessing or using in an examination or test any crib sheet, revision or other notes, books, paper, mobile phone, smart watch or electronic device of any kind other than those specifically permitted in the rubric of the examination paper. The offence lies in the possession of the material and does not depend on whether there was any intention to use the material.**
  - b. Obtaining access to an unseen examination or test material prior to the start of the examination/test.**
  - c. Failing to comply with the legitimate instructions of an invigilator or examiner, or with the instructions for students (for example signage, written instructions, on-line information).**
  - d. Removing from an examination or test any script, paper, working notes or other official stationery, whether or not completed, or any electronic records provided as part of the examination unless specifically authorised by an invigilator or examiner.**
  - e. Being party to personation, which is any arrangement where a person fraudulently represents, or intends to represent, a candidate in an examination or test.**

- f. Communicating with another student or with any third party, other than an invigilator or examiner, whilst in the examination/test room.**
- g. Copying the work of another student, whether by overlooking their work, asking them for information, or by any other means, or knowingly allowing their own work to be copied.**
- h. Making false declarations in an attempt to obtain either modified assessment provisions or special consideration (e.g. of extenuating circumstances).**
- i. Attempting to persuade another member of the University (student, staff, or invigilator) to participate in any actions which would be in breach of these regulations.**
- j. Being party to any arrangement which would constitute a breach of these regulations.**
- k. Undertaking any other activity which could confer an unfair advantage to any candidate(s) taking an examination or test.**

- 2. The University reserves the right to refer any case direct to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience to decide whether immediate suspension or referral to the [Study and Wellbeing Review Policy](#) is required, while the suspected exam offence is considered.**

The decision on whether to refer the case to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience will take into account matters including, but not limited to, the severity of the alleged offence or any potential risk to the student's health or welfare.

Where a student is suspected of having committed an offence in a formal University examination, the invigilators will complete an Examination Offences Report Form.

Where a student is suspected of having committed an offence in an in-class test the invigilators will complete an Examination Offences Report Form, copying it to the Examinations Office and Faculty Office and, if appropriate, the Academic Partnerships Office, within 5 working days of the date of the test.

- 3. All cases of alleged examination offence will be considered by a University Assessment Offences Panel.**

**The composition of the University Assessment Offences Panel will be as follows:**

- **Chair (an academic member of Faculty for taught modules, or Director of Doctoral College for postgraduate research degree students taking taught modules). For partner institution cases, the Chair should be a Partnership Manager or the Head of Partnerships);**
- **Two academic members (drawn from a pool of 12 academic staff, nominated by Deans of Faculty for taught modules. For postgraduate research student cases, the academic members of the Panel should have experience of postgraduate research supervision and examination. The Doctoral College may nominate these members. For UK partner institution cases, the academic members of the Panel should be drawn from a partner institution(s) other than the institution in which the student subject to investigation is studying. If a member from a partner institution is not available, the academic members of the Panel should be drawn from Academic Partnerships);**

**The Panel will be considered quorate provided that one academic staff member is present, in addition to the Panel Chair. The Faculty Registrar or nominee/ Partnerships Operations Manager or nominee/ Doctoral College Manager or nominee must also be in attendance in an advisory capacity and to take notes.**

**All members of the Panel will have equal voting rights. A decision will be taken based on the majority vote wherever possible. When required, the Chair shall have the deciding vote.**

The Faculty / Academic Partnerships / Doctoral College will provide administrative support for the operation of the Panel.

A Panel member may not consider the case of a student from their own School or Partner institution, or a student they know. Any conflict of interests must be declared to the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager/Doctoral College Manager.

- 4. The Panel will consider all of the evidence put before it and will ask questions of both the student and any witnesses relating to the alleged offence in order to establish the facts of the case. The student (or their representative) will have the opportunity to ask questions of any witnesses. If the student chooses not to appear before the Panel then their written statement will be considered by the Panel.**

**5. The Assessment Offences Panel will decide either:**

- a) That the allegation is not substantiated and that no further action is required; or
- b) That the allegation is substantiated and that one of the penalties in 6, below, will be applied. At this stage, the Panel will be made aware of any previous substantiated offences committed by the student.

On reaching a decision on which penalty to apply, the Panel will consider and record:

- The magnitude of the advantage gained by the offence, had it not been detected;
- The severity and extent of the offence;
- The student's academic stage, in relation to the University's expectations about knowledge of good academic practice and personal responsibility;
- The number of previous offences. Second and subsequent offences should incur a penalty of at least one step above that appropriate for a first offence of the same character;
- In the case of multiple offences taking place in separate examinations taken during one examination period, the opportunity for the student to learn from the detection of one offence before other assessments are submitted.

The Panel may refer the case to the [Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure](#), or the [Study and Wellbeing Review Policy](#) as appropriate, following discussion with the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager/Doctoral College Manager

**In all cases where an allegation is substantiated, the University will direct the student to guidance and support to avoid repeat offences**

If the allegation is not substantiated, the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager /Doctoral College Manager, will ensure that all records relating to the allegation are removed from the student's permanent record at the University, and partner institution if appropriate.

If the allegation is substantiated, the offence should be recorded on the student's permanent record.

**6. The penalties that can be imposed are as follows:**

- a) **The offence be recorded on the student's permanent record but there will be no change to the mark that the student has been awarded. The offence may be taken into account by future Panels when determining the penalty for any subsequent offences.**
- b) **The mark for the component be capped (at 40% for modules at Levels 4-6 and 50% for modules at Level 7). This penalty can only be awarded if the standard of the work is deemed to be worthy of the capped mark when the material which is the subject of the offence is discounted.**
- c) **A mark of zero will be recorded for the component.**
- d) **A mark of zero will be recorded for the element.**
- e) **A mark of zero will be recorded for the module.**
- f) **The final aggregate mark for the programme will be reduced by 10%.**
- g) **The student is required to resubmit the assessment or repeat the module, with the award of credit only, with zero marks on successful completion.**
- h) **A mark of zero be recorded for the module of which the assessment formed a part; the student is barred from taking the module again and must withdraw from the programme.**

**The Panel is able to impose a more stringent penalty than that immediately suggested by the list above, provided that the context and rationale for that penalty is clear and documented.**

**A student on a programme leading to registration with a professional body is likely to be required to declare any substantiated offence with that professional body upon registration. The University may also inform the professional body.**

**Exceptionally, the Panel may conclude that an offence is so serious that it should be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience with the recommendation that the student is excluded from the University and/or partner institution. Where such a referral is made for a student on a University of Plymouth programme at a partner institution, the Principal of the partner institution will also be consulted.**

- 7. The penalty awarded by the Panel in accordance with the tariff shall be binding upon the Award Assessment Board unless the wider assessment profile means that the penalty is no longer appropriate (if, for example, a**

**student has committed multiple offences across a module, the penalty may be increased).**

The Secretary to the Panel will report the Panel's decision to the student, Dean of Faculty or Academic Partnerships, Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager/Doctoral College Manager in writing within five working days of the date of the Panel's decision.

Where a student is enrolled on a University of Plymouth programme in a partner institution, the Partnerships Operations Manager is responsible for informing the partner institution of the Panel's decision.

**8. Substantiated offences will be reported to the Subject Assessment Panel and Award Assessment Board.**

- 9. A student may appeal against the decision or penalty imposed by the Assessment Offences Panel on the following grounds;**
- a) Evidence of procedural irregularity which casts doubt on the conclusion of the Panel that an offence has occurred or on the fairness of the penalty imposed;**
  - b) Where there is new evidence which for good reason could not have been made available to the Assessment Offences Panel at the time it made its decision;**
  - c) Where there is evidence that the Assessment Offences Panel acted unfairly or failed to take into account matters which it should have done in reaching its decision.**

**Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Complaints and Appeals Office within 10 working days of the date of the letter notifying the student of the outcome of the Panel hearing.**

Appeals against an Assessment Offences Panel outcome should be submitted in line with the University's Academic Appeals Procedure available [here](#)

Following completion of the University's internal appeals procedures, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued. A student who remains dissatisfied with the outcome may make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

## AST10.2 Academic Offences Regulations

This regulation should be read alongside the [Assessment Offences and Research Misconduct Procedures](#).

This regulation applies to offences occurring in formal University assessments (excluding formal examinations and in-class tests, which are dealt with under the Examination Offences procedures, set out in section AST10.1.

This regulation applies to:

- summative assessments, other than examinations or in-class tests, which contribute towards the award of credit for taught modules,
- the satisfactory completion of CPD activity (i.e. summative and not formative assessments), or
- the Confirmation of Route process, and Project Approval process (research degrees), and
- the examination of the final thesis (research degrees).
- 

Alleged offences in formative assessment may also be referred through the full academic offences process and / or Fitness to Practise proceedings on programmes leading to professional registration.

Where offences are identified in a formative assessment on all other programmes, these should be drawn to the student's attention by the module leader and the student advised of the consequences of committing an offence in a summative assessment. Where a tutor or supervisor notices that a student has received such advice previously, this may trigger a further discussion.

Where offences are identified in any formative written document prepared by a postgraduate research degree student, with the exception of those submitted as part of the final thesis examination, Project Approval or Confirmation of Route assessments, these should be drawn to the student's attention by the supervisory team. For research degree students who do not heed such advice on more than two occasions, "research misconduct" processes should be followed as per section AST10.3 below.

Academic offence allegations made against students registered on University of Plymouth research degree awards shall be investigated under these procedures, where the allegations relate to research undertaken for the purposes of that award. All allegations concerning misconduct in research undertaken for purposes other than the award for which a student is registered shall be investigated under procedures set out in section AST10.3.

- |   |
|---|
| <p><b>1. Academic offences occur when activity is undertaken which could confer an unfair advantage to any candidate(s) in assessment. The University recognises the following (including any attempt to carry out the actions described) as academic offences, regardless of intent:</b></p> |
|---|



- a. **Plagiarism, which is copying or paraphrasing of other people's work or ideas into a submitted assessment without full acknowledgement. More information on plagiarism is available [here](#).**
- b. **Collusion, which is unauthorised collaboration of students (or others) in producing a submitted assessment. The offence of collusion occurs if a student copies any part of another student's work, or allows their own work to be copied. Collusion also occurs if other people contribute significantly to work that a student submits as their own.**
- c. **Contract cheating, often called 'ghost writing', which occurs when another person or people are commissioned or otherwise engaged to undertake an assessment, totally or in part, and the assessment is submitted as the student's own work.**
- d. **Misrepresenting or fabricating the outcomes and results of research, investigations, or experiments.**
- e. **Making false declarations in an attempt to obtain special consideration in assessment. Examples include falsely claiming a need for modified assessment provision or making false extenuating circumstances claims.**
- f. **The inclusion in an assessment (other than an examination or test) of material which is identical or substantially similar to material which has already been submitted for any other assessment within the University.**
- g. **Persuading or attempting to persuade another member of the University or partner institution to participate, in any way, in actions which would be in breach of these regulations.**
- h. **Being party to any arrangement which would be a breach of these regulations.**
- i. **Any other activity which could confer an unfair advantage to any candidate(s) in assessment.**

2. **The University reserves the right to refer any case direct to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience (taught modules) or the Director of the Doctoral College (research degrees) to decide whether immediate suspension or referral to the [Study and Wellbeing Review Policy](#) is required.**

**3. All allegations of academic offences against research degree students concerning the Confirmation of Route or the final thesis will be considered by a full Assessment Offences Panel.**

**4. All cases of alleged academic offence will be considered by a University Assessment Offences Panel.**

**The composition of the Assessment Offences Panel will be as follows:**

- **Chair (an academic member of Faculty for taught modules, or Director of Doctoral College for research degrees. For partner institution cases, the Chair should be a Partnership Manager or the Head of Partnerships)**
- **Two academic members (drawn from a pool of 12 academic staff, nominated by Deans of Faculty, for taught modules. For postgraduate research student cases, the academic members of the Panel should have experience of postgraduate research supervision and examination. The Doctoral College may nominate these members. For UK Partner Institution cases, the academic members of the Panel should be drawn from a Partner Institution(s) other than the institution in which the student under investigation is studying). If a member of the Partner Institution is not available, the academic members of the Panel should be drawn from Academic Partnerships)**

**The Panel will be considered quorate provided that one academic staff member is present, in addition to the Panel Chair. The Faculty Registrar or nominee/ Partnerships Operations Manager or nominee/ Doctoral College Manager or nominee must also be in attendance in an advisory capacity and to take notes**

**All members of the Panel will have equal voting rights. A decision will be taken based on the majority vote wherever possible. When required, the Chair shall have the deciding vote.**

Where necessary, the Chair of an Assessment Offences Panel may invite a subject specialist to advise the Panel. The nature of the discipline may mean that it is unavoidable that the adviser is from the same School as the student, but the adviser should not have taught the student, or been involved in the supervision of the student in the case of research degree students. The adviser must not take part in the Panel's decision making.

The Faculty / Academic Partnerships / Doctoral College will provide administrative support for the operation of the Panel.

- 5. The Panel will consider all of the evidence put before it and will ask questions of both the student and any witnesses relating to the alleged offence in order to establish the facts of the case. The student (or their representative) will have the opportunity to ask questions of any witnesses. If the student chooses not to appear before the Panel then their written statement will be considered by the Panel.**

The Module Leader or Director of Studies (for PGR students) should be available at the time of the Panel meeting, should the Panel require clarification on any points of fact.

**6. The Assessment Offences Panel will decide as follows:**

- a) That the allegation is not substantiated and that no further action is required; or
- b) That the allegation is substantiated and that one of the following penalties in 7, below, will be applied. At this stage, the Panel will be made aware of any previous offences committed by the student.

On reaching a decision on which penalty to apply, the Panel will consider and record:

- The magnitude of the advantage gained by the offence, had it not been detected ;
- The severity and extent of the offence;
- The student's academic stage, in relation to the University's expectations about knowledge of good academic practice and personal responsibility;
- The number of previous offences. Second and subsequent offences should incur a penalty of at least one step above that appropriate for a first offence of the same character;
- In the case of multiple offences taking place within separate assessments submitted in a short space of time, the opportunity for the student to learn from the detection of one offence before other assessments are submitted.

The Panel may refer the case to the [Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure](#), or the [Study and Wellbeing Review Policy](#) as appropriate, following discussion with the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager/Doctoral College Manager

In all cases where an allegation is substantiated, the University will direct the student to guidance and support to avoid repeat offences.

Where an allegation is not substantiated, the Faculty Registrar/Doctoral College Manager/Partnerships Operations Manager will ensure that all records relating to the allegation are removed from the student's record at the University, and partner institution if appropriate.

**7. The penalties that can be imposed for offences in taught modules are as follows:**

- a) **The offence be recorded on the student's permanent record but there will be no change to the mark that the student has been awarded. The offence may be taken into account by future Panels when determining the penalty for any subsequent offences.**
- b) **The mark for the component be capped (at 40% for modules at Levels 4-6 and 50% for modules at Level 7). This penalty can only be awarded if the standard of the work is deemed to be worthy of the capped mark when the material which is the subject of the offence is discounted.**
- c) **A mark of zero will be recorded for the component.**
- d) **A mark of zero will be recorded for the element.**
- e) **A mark of zero will be recorded for the module.**
- f) **The final aggregate mark for the programme will be reduced by 10%.**
- g) **The student is required to resubmit the assessment or repeat the module, with the award of credit only, with zero marks on successful completion.'**
- h) **A mark of zero be recorded for the module of which the assessment formed a part, the student is barred from taking the module again and must withdraw from the programme.**

**The Panel is able to impose a more stringent penalty than that immediately suggested by the list above, provided that the context and rationale for that penalty is clear and documented.**

**A student on a programme leading to registration with a professional body is likely to be required to declare any substantiated offence with that professional body upon registration. The University may also inform the professional body about the offence.**

**Exceptionally, the Panel may conclude that an offence is so serious that it should be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student**

**Experience with the recommendation that the student is excluded from the University and/or partner institution. Where such a referral is made for a student on a University of Plymouth programme at a partner institution, the Principal of the partner institution will also be consulted.**

- 8. The penalties that can be imposed for an academic offence in assessed formative elements of research degrees (that is, Project Approval or Confirmation of Route submissions) are:**
- a) The offence is recorded on the student's permanent record, but the submission passed if the offence was deemed to be non-deliberate (e.g. poor referencing practice) and the standard of work is otherwise deemed to be worthy of doing so. The offence will be taken into account by future Panels when determining the penalty for any subsequent offences.**
  - b) If at first attempt: the offence noted on the student's permanent record, and failure at first assessment attempt. The student may submit revised work as a second attempt within 3 months of notification of panel outcome being sent. At the discretion of the Academic Offences Panel, the student may be provided with additional feedback arising from the assessment process to support the resubmission; if relevant, this must be sent to the student within 20 working days of the outcome notification.**
  - c) If at second attempt: the offence noted on the student's permanent record, and exceptional permission granted to submit corrected work for a final assessment attempt within 3 months of the notification of panel outcome being sent. The student may not be provided with any additional feedback arising from the assessment process (beyond that provided for the Academic Offence Panel) to support this resubmission.**
  - d) The requirement to undertake a piece of work and/or training related to the nature of the offence may be added to a-c above.**
  - e) The offence recorded on the student's permanent record, and withdrawal from the programme of study required. This penalty is likely to be considered when this is the student's second proven academic offence and/or case of research misconduct.**

Penalties for academic offences by research degree students in taught modules are outlined in AST10.2.7

9. The penalties that can be imposed for an academic offence in assessed summative elements of research degrees (that is, final submitted thesis and/or *viva voce* examination) are:
- a) The offence recorded on the student's permanent record, and (if relevant) the examination team informed. The *viva voce* examination may take place if it hasn't already with the following outcomes: (see AST9.1)

**If first submission: Corrections; Defer; Compensatory Award; or Fail**

**If resubmitted thesis: Corrections, Compensatory Award; or Fail**

**In the case of Corrections, Defer, or Compensatory Awards, amendments must be made to the satisfaction of the examiners to eliminate the proven academic offence, prior to the student being awarded a degree. These requirements must be formally noted on the list of corrections or guidelines/advice for the resubmission of a deferred thesis.**

- b) The offence recorded on the student's permanent record, and an outcome of 'Defer' recorded for the examination. The student is permitted to resubmit for re-examination for the award as per AST9.1, with the exception that the student may not be provided with any additional feedback or guidance arising from the assessment process (beyond that provided for the Academic Offence Panel) to support this resubmission. This penalty cannot be offered in the case of a resubmitted thesis
- c) The requirement to undertake training related to the nature of the offence may be added to a or b above.
- d) The offence is recorded on the student's permanent record, and an outcome of 'fail' be recorded for the examination. The student is barred from resubmitting the thesis and must withdraw from the programme. This penalty is likely to be considered when this is the student's second academic offence and/or proven research misconduct and/or when the offence occurs in a resubmitted thesis or the final permitted submission of corrections (see AST9.1)
- e) For an academic offence in the (first) submission of corrections to a thesis, the offence recorded on the student's permanent record, and an outcome of 'Corrections' recorded (see AST9.1 ). The list of corrections must include the elimination of the proven academic offence to be undertaken to the satisfaction of the examiners.

In the case of d above, the student may be awarded a PgCert or PgDip for taught modules completed, at the discretion of the Panel.

**10. A student who is also registered with a professional body is likely to be required to declare any substantiated offence to that professional body. The University may also inform the professional body about the offence.**

The Faculty Registrar (or Partnerships Operations Manager in Academic Partnerships) / Doctoral College Manager will report the Panel's decision to the student, the School (and the partner institution or Doctoral College if appropriate) in writing within five working days of the date of the Panel's decision.

**11. A student may appeal against the decision or penalty imposed by the Academic Offences Panel on the following grounds;**

- a) Evidence of administrative error or procedural irregularity which casts doubt on the conclusion of the Panel that an offence has occurred or on the fairness of the penalty imposed;**
- b) Where there is new evidence which for good reason was not available to the Academic Offences Panel at the time it made its decision;**
- c) Where there is evidence that the Academic Offences Panel acted unfairly or failed to take into account matters which it should have done in reaching its decision.**

**Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Complaints and Appeals Office within 10 working days of the date of the letter notifying the student of the outcome of the Panel hearing.**

Appeals must be submitted in line with the University's Academic Appeals Procedure available [here](#).

Following completion of the University's internal appeals procedure, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued. A student who remains dissatisfied with the outcome may make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

### **AST10.3 Research Misconduct (Postgraduate Research degrees only)**

Should the activities below form part of assessed elements of a research degree (i.e. taught modules, Project Approval, Confirmation of Route, Final submitted thesis or *viva voce* examination), they would normally be handled as per AST10.1 or AST10.2.

**1. Research misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following, whether deliberate, reckless or negligent:**

- a. Failure to obtain appropriate permission to conduct research;
- b. Deception in relation to research proposals;
- c. Unethical behaviour in the conduct of research (the University's policy on human ethics in research in the Research Ethics Policy applies, but other ethical issues may also be involved);
- d. Unauthorised use of information which was acquired confidentially;
- e. Deviation from good research practice, where this results in unreasonable risk of harm to humans, other animals or the environment;
- f. Distortion of research outcomes, by distortion or omission of data that do not fit expected results;
- g. Dishonest misinterpretation of results;
- h. Publication of data known or believed to be false or misleading;
- i. Misquotation or misrepresentation of other authors;
- j. Inappropriate attribution of authorship;
- k. Fraud or other misuse of research funds or research equipment;
- l. Attempting, planning or conspiring to be involved in research misconduct;
- m. Inciting others to be involved in research misconduct;
- n. Collusion in or concealment of research misconduct by others, and
- o. Failure to comply with relevant legislation, including that relating to health and safety, data protection, intellectual property, human rights and animal experimentation.

**Research misconduct does not include honest error or honest differences in the design, execution, interpretation or judgment in evaluating research methods or results or misconduct unrelated to the research process. Similarly it does not include poor research unless this encompasses the intention to deceive.**

The University expects all postgraduate research students to follow the [University's Code of Good Research Practice](#) protocols, and the University's [Research Ethics Policy](#).



Where a postgraduate research student is suspected of research misconduct, the Director of the Doctoral College or nominee, will investigate the alleged offence in consultation with the Doctoral College Manager. The Doctoral College should also inform the Faculty Registrar that the investigation is taking place.

If the Director of the Doctoral College Director or nominee, completes the investigation and concludes that there is no evidence of an offence being committed, all records of the allegation will be removed from the student's University record. A copy will be kept in the Doctoral College for audit purposes.

If the Director of the Doctoral College Director or nominee, completes the investigation and concludes that there is evidence to suggest research misconduct has occurred, the case will be processed under the Assessment Offences and Research Misconduct procedures.

**2. The penalties that can be imposed for research misconduct offences in postgraduate research degrees are:**

- a) A formal warning noted on the student's record (which will be removed on successful completion of the programme).**
- b) The research misconduct noted on the student's permanent record, with guidance provided by the Panel as to how to correct or make amends (if necessary), how this will be monitored and by whom, in what timeframe, and the consequences of non-compliance.**
- c) In conjunction with a or b, the requirement to undertake a piece of work or complete training related to the nature of the research misconduct.**
- d) The research misconduct recorded on the student's permanent record, and withdrawal from the programme of study. This penalty is likely to be considered when this is the student's second instance of research misconduct and/or academic offence.**

The Doctoral College Manager will report the Panel's decision to the student, the Doctoral College, the School and the Faculty Registrar in writing within 5 University working days of the Panel's decision.

- 3. A student who is also registered with a professional body is likely to be required to declare any substantiated offence to that professional body. The University may also inform the professional body about the offence.**

## **AST11 Appeal Against the Decision of an Assessment Board (Taught students) or Academic Decision (Research students)**

This regulation applies to students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved. This regulation should be read alongside the Academic Appeals, available [here](#).

**1. Students will not be disadvantaged if they make an appeal in good faith.**

**2. A student on a taught programme, or taught module as part of a research degree may submit an appeal against a decision of an Award Assessment Board or the Research Degrees Taught Elements Board respectively, that affects their academic progress, or right to an award.**

**3. A research degree student has the right to appeal against academic decisions affecting their progression. Such academic decisions include, but are not restricted to:**

- a. The decision to withdraw a student from the research degree due to lack of academic progress (including during the probationary period).**
- b. The decision to withdraw a student from the research degree due to lack of contact with the University (including during the probationary period).**
- c. The decision to withdraw a student from the research degree following the Project Approval process.**
- d. The decision to withdraw a student from the research degree following the Confirmation of Route process.**
- e. The decision to require a student to remain on a Masters level path following the Confirmation of Route process.**
- f. The decision, as a result of a recommendation of the examiners, not to award a student the degree for which they were registered, and not to permit the student to submit a revised thesis for the same degree.**

**4. The University will only accept an appeal where the student can produce evidence that:**

- \* Assessments were not conducted in accordance with the current Assessment Regulations; or**
- \* Some other demonstrable material irregularity related to assessment has occurred**

**Extenuating circumstances (whether relating to University issues, personal or medical problems or any other issue) which are not submitted to the Faculty or School/Department (taught modules) or Doctoral College (research degrees) by the due date may be considered as grounds for appeal only in the most exceptional circumstances (for instance where the student was unable to disclose the circumstances in advance because of a medical condition). Since the University permits the submission of extenuating circumstances under confidential cover, the fact that a student did not wish to disclose personal information will not be considered as an exceptional circumstance.**

**5. An appeal cannot be made against the academic or professional judgement of the examiners (that is, the marks allocated, or the result in itself).**

Students may not challenge the validity of their results other than in the case of an alleged transcription error, or on the basis of evidence of material irregularity related to assessment.

Students who suspect that an error has occurred in relation to the transcription of marks (e.g. the wrong mark for a module has been entered on to the transcript), should raise the matter directly and in writing with their Faculty Office or the Doctoral College. Such enquiries will not be treated as formal appeals.

Where a student, having been informed in writing that there has been no error, wishes to appeal, they must make a formal appeal to the Secretary to the Complaints and Appeals Board in the normal way, after marks have been ratified by the Award Assessment Board. If the advice to the student that there was no error is given after the deadline for submission of appeals, the deadline will be extended until ten working days after the date of that advice.

**6. The appeal procedure is concerned only with formal progression or award decisions and the assessment processes which give rise to these. It is not appropriate to deal with problems experienced with programme delivery or availability of facilities (for example) via the appeal procedure.**

Students should raise such problems by the appropriate means when they arise e.g. via the University Student Complaints Procedure, available [here](#)

**7. No appeal will be considered if it raises for the first time issues concerning the supervision or teaching of a student.**

Such matters will only be considered if they have been raised by the student promptly, at the time they first arose and pursued under the [Student Complaints Procedure](#).

**8. If, within an appeal, the student identifies issues which, in the view of the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) would be more appropriately dealt with via the Student Complaints Procedure, the student will be directed to that procedure. If the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) believes that the outcome of the complaint may be a factor in determining the appeal, the student will be advised accordingly and the appeal procedure suspended in relation to those issues until:**

- **the complaint is resolved, or**
- **the student indicates that they do not wish to progress further with the University Student Complaints Procedure or**
- **the University Student Complaints Procedure has been exhausted.**

Where an appeal encompasses a range of issues, those which are not factors likely to be material to the determination of the appeal will be investigated via the complaints procedure and the outcome notified to the student in advance of consideration of the appeal. Students will be advised that whilst the University will take steps to ensure that their case is dealt with as quickly as possible, it may not be possible to conclude a complaint (and hence appeal) prior to any resit assessments, thesis resubmission deadlines, or by the Assessment Board at which the student's profile will next be considered, or by the commencement of the next stage of their programme.

Where a student submits a formal (written) complaint to the Complaints and Appeals Office which raises issues which may have impacted on assessment, or a progression or award decision, the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will advise the student that the issues being complained of will be investigated via the complaints procedure. If the complaint is upheld, the case will be referred to an Appeal Panel to determine whether the outcome might form the basis for an appeal. The appeal procedure as described in the current appeal regulations will then be followed.

**9. The original progression or award decision of an examining body stands until such time as it may be changed by that body, following an upheld appeal.**

In some instances, a Graduation Ceremony may be held within the two week deadline period for the submission of appeals. In such cases, students on taught programmes will be permitted to attend the Ceremony, without prejudicing any appeal they may later submit, providing the appeal is submitted within the deadline. Students on research degree programmes will not be able to graduate before the outcome of an appeal is known.

Students whose appeals are undergoing consideration at the time of a Graduation Ceremony may also attend the Ceremony without prejudicing the outcome of the appeal process. Such students will not receive an award certificate until the appeal is concluded.

- 10. Academic appeals must be made by the student themselves and all subsequent correspondence from the University will be addressed to the student.**

In line with the provisions of the Data Protection Act, the University has a policy on the confidentiality of information held about individual students, including their assessment results, such that information may not be released to any third party other than when required by law or at the written request of the student.

- 11. Appeals must be made in writing to the Complaints and Appeals Office.**

Appeals submitted to the Faculty Office, the Doctoral College, the supervisory team, the Chair of Award Assessment Board, etc, will not be processed.

Students are required to complete and submit an Appeal Pro-forma, which is available [here](#) and copies are also available from Faculty Offices, Doctoral College and partner institutions.

- 12. For programmes operating within the standard undergraduate structure, a specific date will be identified annually as the deadline by which appeals must be received by the Complaints and Appeals Office. This deadline will be 10 working days after the deadline for publication of results lists (not the date of issue of the student's transcript), as specified in the University Academic and Administrative Timetable.**

**For non-standard undergraduate programmes and for postgraduate programmes, a deadline of ten working days after the actual date of publication of the official results list (not the date of issue of the student's transcript), will be set and notified to students in writing.**

**Research degree students must appeal within ten working days of the formal notification of the academic decision.**

**Students on a University of Plymouth programme at an associated Partner Institution must submit an appeal by the date specified in the results letter, which will be no later than ten working days after the date on the results letter.**

The deadline for appeals against the decision of the Award Assessment Board for standard programmes and the deadline for appeals against the decision of the Referral Award Assessment Board for standard programmes are published [here](#).

Students are encouraged to submit appeals as soon as is practicable. The University will take steps to expedite consideration of appeals, but there can be no guarantees that they will be resolved prior to resit examinations/ assessments deadlines.

**13. Appeals submitted after the University's published deadlines will be out of time and will not normally be considered under the Appeals Procedures. However, the University recognises that sometimes events occur outside a student's control which prevents them from engaging with the University's Appeals Procedure at the relevant time.**

**If a student submits an appeal out of time they will need to demonstrate that exceptional circumstances existed that prevented them from submitting their appeal at the appropriate time.**

Students will need to provide corroborative evidence such as a medical certificate to support the fact that they were prevented from submitting their appeal by the University's published deadlines. This is in addition to any evidence submitted as part of the appeal against the academic decision.

The decision on whether or not to accept an appeal submitted out of time will be taken by the Complaints and Appeals Office and is the final decision of the University, against which there is no further right of appeal.

**14. All appeals will be considered in line with the published University [academic appeals procedure](#).**

**15. All academic appeals that are made in line with the grounds set out above will be considered at the Formal Stage by the Complaints and Appeals Office.**

**For appeals about taught programmes or modules, the Complaints and Appeals Office will decide:**

- the appeal is rejected since there are no grounds under the Regulations;**  
**or**
- the appeal is upheld and the case referred back to the Faculty for review, through the Award Assessment Board.**

**For appeals about research degrees, the Complaints and Appeals Office will decide that:**

- **the appeal is rejected since there are no grounds under the Regulations; or**
- **the appeal is upheld, and the most appropriate action recommended, taking into account the grounds of the appeal.**

**16. Where a student remains dissatisfied with the Formal Stage decision, they may apply for their case to be considered at the Review Stage, by an Appeal Panel. A student must request a review, in writing, within ten working days of the date on the Formal Stage outcome letter.**

**17. Appeals will be considered at the Review Stage where a student can demonstrate that:**

- **There was a material procedural irregularity in the conduct of the Formal Stage.**
- **The outcome was not reasonable in all the circumstances.**

**In exceptional circumstances, the University will consider appeals at the Review Stage where new material evidence is available, which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process.**

The decision on whether the University can consider the appeal under the Review Stage will be made by the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or equivalent). Where the Complaints and Appeals Manager (or equivalent) does not find that a student has demonstrated grounds for the appeal to be considered at the Review Stage, the Complaints and Appeals Office will issue a Completion of Procedures letter.

The review stage will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve a further investigation. An academic appeal must have been considered at the Formal Stage before it can be escalated to the Review Stage.

**15. The Appeal Panel considering Review Stage cases for students on a taught award (or taught module as part of a research degree) will comprise three members, of whom at least one will be a member of the Students' Union. None of the Panel will be from the Faculty in which the appellant is registered.**

**The Appeal Panel considering cases for students on research degree awards will comprise two members with experience of supervising and examining research degrees, (such as local academic Research Degrees Managers, plus the Director of the Doctoral College or nominee) and an Officer from the Students' Union) . No member of an Appeal Panel shall have had no previous involvement in the case. No student or research degree candidate may be a member of an Appeal Board considering a postgraduate research appeal. None of the Panel will be from the School in which the appellant is registered.**

The Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will ensure an appropriate gender balance in determining Panel membership.

**16. For appeals about taught programmes or modules, the Panel will decide that:**

- **the appeal is rejected since the Formal Stage decision was reasonable in all the circumstances; or**
- **the appeal is upheld and the case referred back to the Faculty for review, through the Award Assessment Board.**

**For appeals about research degrees, the Panel will decide that:**

- **the appeal is rejected since the Formal Stage decision was reasonable in all the circumstances; or**
- **the appeal is upheld, and the most appropriate action recommended, taking into account the grounds of the appeal.**

**Where the recommendation to uphold and allow the Appeal to proceed is made, this course of action will be implemented providing the majority of Panel members consulted agree to it.**

**Where the recommendation to reject the appeal is made, this course of action will only be implemented provided all Panel members consulted agree to it.**

If there is disagreement amongst the Panel members consulted as to whether an appeal should be rejected, the case will be considered by two other nominees drawn from across the Faculties / Doctoral College and the Students' Union (taught awards only), neither of whom will be from the Faculty in which the appellant is registered. The Complaints and Appeals Manager (or nominee) will continue to ensure an appropriate gender balance in



Panel membership when determining the additional members to be consulted. The final decision on the appeal will be that indicated by the majority of Panel members.

**17. The Complaints and Appeals Officer (or nominee) will process all appeal cases as soon as is practicable.**

It is anticipated that all cases arising from the Summer Award Assessment Boards (taught awards only) will normally be concluded by the last working day in August.

**18. All appellants will be advised of the Appeal Panel's decision in writing.**

Students will be issued with an Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) 'Completion of Procedures' letter when they have completed the Review Stage.

## Section E: Awards

### **AWD1 Awards (including calculation of degree classification for taught programmes)**

This regulation applies to all students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partner institutions, unless non-standard regulations have been formally approved.

Please contact the Exams and Awards Office for the specifications for conferring honorary awards.

#### **1. Higher National Certificate (HNC)**

**A Higher National Certificate can be awarded to:**

- **A student who is registered by the University with Edexcel for the award of the HNC and has successfully completed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 4 or above, including all modules designated as essential for the award; or.**
- **A student who has successfully completed a minimum of 120 credits at Level 4 or above in an HND programme on which s/he is not continuing, provided they have completed the modules which are designated as essential for the award of the HNC.**

**If the student's aggregate mark across all modules is 70% or above, the HNC will be awarded with Distinction.**

**If the student's aggregate mark across all modules is between 60% and 69%, the HNC will be awarded with Merit.**

**The student's aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:**

**Level 4 will be weighted 1**

#### **2. Higher National Diploma (HND)**

**A Higher National Diploma can be awarded to a student who is registered by the University with Edexcel for the award of the HND and has successfully completed 240 credits, including at least 120 credits at Level 5.**

**If the student's aggregate mark across all modules is 70% or above, the HND will be awarded with Distinction.**

**If the student's aggregate mark across all modules is between 60% and 69%, the HND will be awarded with Merit.**

**The student's aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:**

**Levels 4 : 5 will be weighted 5 : 5**

All modules at Levels 4 and 5 count towards the award of a Merit or Distinction.

### **3. Foundation Degree**

**A Foundation Degree will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed a minimum of 240 credits, including at least 120 credits at Level 5 or above.**

**If the student's aggregate mark across all modules is 70% or above, the Foundation Degree will be awarded with Distinction.**

**If the student's aggregate mark across all modules is between 60% and 69%, the Foundation Degree will be awarded with Merit.**

**The student's aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:**

**Levels 4 : 5 will be weighted 5 : 5**

All modules at Levels 4 and 5 count towards the award of a Merit or Distinction.

### **4 Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)**

**A Certificate of Higher Education may be awarded to:**

- **a student who is registered for the award of a Certificate of Higher Education and has successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4 or above; or**
- **a student who has successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4 or above in an undergraduate programme on which they are not**

continuing, provided the credits successfully completed fall within the programme specification for the award.

If the aggregate of the student's best 120 credits falling within the programme specification (subject to any core or co-requisite requirements) is 70% or above, the CertHE will be awarded with Distinction.

If a student is registered for the award of a Certificate of Higher Education, their aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:

Level 4 will be weighted 1

#### 5. Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)

A Diploma of Higher Education may be awarded to:

- a student who is registered for the award of a Diploma of Higher Education and has successfully completed 240 credits, including at least 120 credits at Level 5 or above; or
- a student who has successfully completed 240 credits, including at least 120 credits at Level 5 or above, in a Degree or Honours Degree programme on which they are not continuing.

If the aggregate of the student's best 120 credits at Level 5 or above falling within the programme specification (subject to any core/pre-requisite requirements) is 70% or above, the DipHE will be awarded with Distinction.

If a student is registered for the award of a Diploma of Higher Education, their aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:

Levels 4 : 5 will be weighted 5 : 5

The above award criteria can also be used for the award of Diploma in Professional Studies, if that is the qualification approved in the definitive award documentation.

#### 6. Degree (without Honours)

A student registered for a Degree is required successfully to complete 320 credits, including 80 credits at Level 6 and 120 further credits at Level 5 or above.

The degree is not classified but a Degree with Commendation will be awarded to a student who achieves an aggregate percentage mark of 60% or

above and a Degree with Distinction will be awarded to a student who achieves an aggregate percentage mark of 70% or above.

Students who completed Level 4 in its entirety before the 2014-15 academic year, or are repeating any part of Level 4 as a next attempt in 2014-15, should refer to [Appendix 2](#) of this document for information on how the classification of the degree is calculated.

The award of Commendation or Distinction for students entering Level 4 from 2014/15 (or who are required to repeat Level 4 in its entirety as a first attempt from 2014/15) will be based initially on the aggregate percentage mark. The aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:

Levels 4 : 5 : 6 will be weighted 1 : 3 : 6

The Level 4 aggregate mark is calculated using the highest module marks totalling 80 credits. Where modules are arranged in such a way that the 80 credits of 'highest module marks' cannot be identified unequivocally, the level 4 aggregate mark calculation should take into account as close to 80 credits as possible, depending on the module structure.

The Level 4 aggregate mark will contribute to the aggregate for the calculation of the classification of the degree only.

A student who is awarded a degree having followed an ordinary degree route may apply to 'top-up' to an Honours Degree (see [SRE1, regulation 6](#)).

## **7. Honours Degree**

An Honours Degree will be awarded to a student who has passed 360 credits (or 480 credits in some programmes, as specified in the definitive programme documentation), including at least 120 credits at Level 6, and a further 120 credits at Level 5 or above, and met any subject specific requirements for the award.

Classification will be based initially on the aggregate percentage mark.

Students who completed Level 4 in its entirety before the 2014-15 academic year, or are repeating any part of Level 4 as a next attempt in 2014-15, should refer to [Appendix 2](#) of this document for information on how the classification of the degree is calculated.

**The aggregate percentage mark for students entering Level 4 from 2014/15 (or who are required to repeat Level 4 in its entirety as a first attempt from 2014/15) will be calculated as follows:**

**Honours degree: Levels 4 : 5 : 6 will be weighted 1 : 3 : 6.**

**The Level 4 aggregate mark is calculated using the highest module marks totalling 80 credits. Where modules are arranged in such a way that the 80 credits of 'highest module marks' cannot be identified unequivocally, the level 4 aggregate mark calculation should take into account as close to 80 credits as possible, depending on the module structure.**

**If the student's aggregate percentage mark falls within the boundaries of the classifications defined below, they are entitled to that award.**

**First Class Honours 70% or above**

**Second Class Honours, Upper Division 60%-69%**

**Second Class Honours, Lower Division 50%-59%**

**Third Class Honours 40%-49%**

If the aggregate percentage achieved by a candidate is not more than 3.0 percentage points below a classification band, the Board must invoke the following alternative classification methods:

- **Level 6 aggregate:** The Award Assessment Board will award an Honours Degree with the higher classification to a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band provided that the student's aggregate percentage at Level 6 is in the higher classification band.
- **Module profile:** The Award Assessment Board will award an Honours Degree with the higher classification to a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band, provided that more than half of the student's Level 5 and 6 credits are in the higher classification band. Each Level 6 credit is double weighted (compared with a Level 5 credit) for this purpose.

Where the module profile is based on Level 6 performance only, a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band will be required to have achieved more than half of the Level 6 credits in the higher classification band in order to be awarded an Honours Degree with the higher classification.

The classification of an intercalated degree will be calculated using the Level 6 aggregate only.

- 8. Where a student has been awarded a University of Plymouth HND or Foundation degree and progresses to University of Plymouth. The degree calculation will follow the same procedure as for internal University of Plymouth students.**

**Following progression to Level 5 of a University of Plymouth award, the award classification for students entering Level 4 from 2014/15 (or who are required to repeat Level 4 in its entirety from 2014/15) will be calculated using the ratio 1 : 3 : 6. (1 from the HND /Foundation Degree, 3 : 6 from the third and fourth years). The aggregate mark from the HND / Foundation Degree will be calculated using the highest module marks at level 4 and level 5 of the Foundation Degree totalling 80 credits. Where modules are arranged in such a way that the 80 credits of 'highest module marks' cannot be identified unequivocally, the level 4 aggregate mark calculation should take into account as close to 80 credits as possible, depending on the module structure.**

**Following progression to Level 6 of a University of Plymouth award, the award classification for students entering Level 4 from 2014/15 (or who are required to repeat Level 4 in its entirety from 2014/15) will be calculated using the ratio 1 : 3 : 6 (1 : 3 from Foundation Degree, 6 from Plymouth final stage) The aggregate mark from level 4 of the Foundation Degree will be calculated using the highest module marks totalling 80 credits.**

**The Level 4 aggregate mark will contribute to the aggregate for the calculation of the classification of the degree only. It will not contribute to the module profile**

This applies to progression from all UoP HND / Foundation degrees, whether or not the progression is to an articulated route.

- 9. Where a student has gained credits from another approved institution of higher education, in the UK or overseas, or through other APEL routes, the degree calculation will follow the agreement made at the time at which those credits were accepted.**

This agreement will be either to award actual marks from such credits, or to assign credit without marks.

Where marks are permitted on entry, they will be used to calculate the final aggregate percentage in the proportions shown in these regulations.

Where marks are not permitted on entry, then the proportion of the degree calculation assigned to the level of study for which marks are absent will be assigned to the next highest level of study.

**10. Integrated Master's degree**

**An Integrated Master's Degree will be awarded to a student who has passed 480 credits, including at least 120 at Level 7, a further 120 at Level 6 or above, and a further 240 at Level 4, 5 or above.**

**The MArch degree will be awarded to a student who has passed 240 credits, including at least 120 at Level 7 and a further 120 at Level 6.**

**An Integrated Master's Degree may be classified, or may be awarded with Commendation and/or with Distinction. Classification will be based initially on the aggregate percentage mark.**

**Students who completed Level 4 in its entirety before the 2014-15 academic year, or are repeating any part of Level 4 as a next attempt in 2014-15, should refer to the Programme Handbook for information on how the classification of the degree is calculated.**

**For students entering Level 4 from 2014/15 (or who are required to repeat Level 4 in its entirety as a first attempt from 2014/15), the aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:**

**Levels 4 : 5 : 6 : 7 will be weighted 1 : 2 : 3 : 4 :**

**The Level 4 aggregate mark will contribute to the aggregate for the calculation of the classification of the degree only. It will not contribute to the module profile.**

**If a student completes an exchange year, the weighting for Level 5 will be carried forward to Level 7. In this instance, the weighting will be 1:0:3:6.**

**11. Certificate of Advanced Professional Studies in Education**

**A Certificate of Advanced Professional Studies in Education will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed the appropriate Level 7 modules, worth at least 30 credits**



**12. Certificate in Management Studies**

**A Certificate in Management Studies will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed the appropriate Level 7 modules, worth 60 credits.**

**13. Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)**

**A Postgraduate Certificate will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed the appropriate modules worth at least 60 credits, of which at least 50 credits must be at level 7.**

**A student will be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate with Merit provided that they have achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 60% or above across all the modules.**

**A student will be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction provided that they have achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 70% or above across all the modules.**

**14. Diploma in Management Studies**

**A Diploma in Management Studies will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed the appropriate Level 7 modules, worth 120 credits.**

**15. Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)**

**A Postgraduate Diploma will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed the appropriate modules worth at least 120 credits, of which at least 100 credits must be at level 7.**

**A student will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma with Merit provided that they have achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 60% or above across all the modules.**

**A student will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction provided that they have achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 70% or above across all the modules.**

<p><b>16. <u>Postgraduate Education Awards</u></b></p> <p><b>Postgraduate Certificate in Education Primary Including:</b></p> <p><b>Early Years</b>  <b>School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)</b>  <b>Schools Direct</b>  <b>Early Years (Schools Direct)</b></p> <p><b>Postgraduate Certificate in Education Secondary (Subject*)</b></p>	<p><b>150 credits at Level 6 or Level 7, with a minimum of 60 credits at Level 7</b></p>
<p><b>Professional Graduate Certificate in Education Primary Including:</b></p> <p><b>Early Years</b>  <b>School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)</b>  <b>Schools Direct</b>  <b>Early Years (Schools Direct)</b></p> <p><b>Professional Graduate Certificate in Education Secondary (Subject*)</b></p>	<p><b>150 credits at Level 6 or Level 7</b></p>
<p><b>Postgraduate Certificate in Education (Incorporating the Diploma in Education and Training)</b></p>	<p><b>120 credits at Level 6 or Level 7, with a minimum of 60 at Level 7</b></p>
<p><b>Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (Incorporating the Diploma in Education and Training)</b></p>	<p><b>120 credits at Level 6 or 7</b></p>
<p><b>Certificate in Education (Incorporating the Diploma in Education and Training)</b></p>	<p><b>120 credits, 30 credits at Level 4 and 90 credits at Level 5</b></p>

<p><b>17. <u>Masters Degree (MA, MBA, MBM, MEd, LLM, MSc)</u></b></p> <p><b>A Masters degree will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed the appropriate modules worth a minimum of 180 credits, all of which must be at Level 7, and must include the dissertation/major project module.</b></p> <p><b>A student will be awarded a Masters degree with Merit provided that they have achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 60% or above across all</b></p>
--

modules (including the dissertation/major project), and provided that the mark for the dissertation/major project is not less than 50%.

A student will be awarded a Masters degree with Distinction provided that they have achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 70% or above across all modules (including the dissertation/major project), and provided that the mark for the dissertation/major project module is not less than 60%.

**18. Master of Research Degree (MRes)**

A Master of Research degree will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed the appropriate modules worth a minimum of 180 credits, all of which must be at Level 7, and must include a dissertation/major project module of at least 100 credits.

A student will be awarded a Master of Research degree with Merit provided that they have achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 60% or above across all modules (including the dissertation/major project), and provided that the mark for the dissertation/major project is not less than 60%.

A student will be awarded a Master of Research degree with Distinction provided that they have achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 70% or above across all modules (including the dissertation/major project), and provided that the mark for the dissertation/major project module is not less than 70%.

**19. Master of Fine Arts Degree (MFA)**

A Master of Fine Arts degree will be awarded to a student who has successfully completed the appropriate modules worth a minimum of 240 credits, of which at least 210 must be at Level 7 and must include the dissertation/major project module.

A student will be awarded a Masters of Fine Arts degree with Merit provided that they have achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 60% or above across all modules (including the dissertation/major project), and provided that the mark for the dissertation/major project is not less than 60%.

A student will be awarded a Masters of Fine Arts degree with Distinction provided that they have achieved a credit-weighted average mark of 70% or above across all modules (including the dissertation/major project), and provided that the mark for the dissertation/major project module is not less than 70%.

The credit achieved from a pass in the dissertation/major project may be used to contribute towards the exit award of Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma. However, this may only normally apply where the dissertation/major project has been undertaken at the University.

If a programme team wishes to circumscribe the use of dissertation credit from contributing to a Postgraduate Certificate / Diploma a non-standard regulation should be sought.

**20. Where a student withdraws or is required to withdraw from the programme on which they are registered, the Award Assessment Board will confer the highest award to which they are entitled.**

**21. Postgraduate research degrees will be awarded where a student has fulfilled the requirements of the research degree programme for which they are registered, as set out in the [QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#).**

The design of a Professional Doctorate will include provision for an appropriately designated Postgraduate award for any student who exits the programme after successful completion of the taught modules but without successfully completing the research project. The name of this award may vary depending on the number of credits completed in the taught element and will be clearly designated in the documentation for approval and subsequently in the student handbook

## **AWD2      PhD on the Basis of Prior Published Works**

These regulations apply to those who wish to apply for, and candidates working towards, a PhD on the Basis of Prior Published Works at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partnerships unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

**1. With the approval of a relevant Faculty Doctoral Committee, a candidate can submit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of prior published works. All publications must be (at least) at the proofs stage (or equivalent for non-textual outputs) upon application, and in the public domain at the time of submission.**

The work submitted for the degree should consist of a collection of published works, papers, chapters, books, and/or creative works in any media (including suitable documentation of performance, installation, and other temporary works) which together form a coherent

programme of research and have been accepted for dissemination by reputable journals, publishing houses, galleries, venues or similar publishing media in the field.

Works should normally have been published in the English language. The candidate must obtain permission from the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee to submit works in languages other than English. This will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

A work will be regarded as published only if it is traceable through ordinary catalogues, abstracts or citation indices, and copies are available in the public domain. Manuscripts of proofs of works about to be published are not submittable unless they carry a DOI reference number. Reports to Government Departments, local or industrial organisations, and the like, are not normally submittable unless they have been published in the public domain and can be evidenced e.g. with an ISBN number.

- 2. Works submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of prior published works must together form a coherent body of work which responds to a research enquiry. At least one of the works must have been published within the last two years.**

It is the responsibility of the candidate to identify and establish the research content of the submission.

- 3. Works previously or simultaneously submitted for another degree, or emanating from research conducted for another degree, must not form a part of the candidate's submission for the award, and a declaration to this effect must be submitted by the candidate along with their application.**

- 4. The application process comprises two phases:**

**Phase 1: Expression of Interest (no fee)**

**Phase 2: Full prima facie application (fee payable)**

The purpose of phase 1 is to enable the University to determine whether resources and expertise are available to support the applicant to completion of the degree within this area of study.

If, under Phase 1 (above), a Faculty confirms that it has the resources and expertise to support the research content to completion, candidates must submit a full application within three months of the notification of the Phase 1 outcome being sent by the Doctoral College.

The purpose of Phase 2 is to satisfy the University that a *prima facie* case can be made for candidature.

**5. The Faculty will allocate a potential Director of Studies, and an expert commentator (internal or external), to assess the applicant's *prima facie* application.**

The proposed Director of Studies must write a statement that either supports the candidature or declines to do so, briefly explaining why in either case.

**6. The Faculty Doctoral Committee will determine whether a *prima facie* case exists, through consideration of the following documentation:**

- **An abstract of the research (of no more than 500 words);**
- **A list of the research outputs on which the submission is to be based, identifying where and when the research contributing to the published works was undertaken, as well as details of any collaborative or co-authored work;**
- **A curriculum vitae for the candidate;**
- **A statement that either supports or declines to support the candidature from the potential Director of Studies (of no more than 500 words);**
- **The Expert Commentator's report form**

**7. If the Faculty Doctoral Committee is satisfied that a *prima facie* case has been made for candidature, the applicant will be permitted to enrol for the degree and to prepare their submission for examination.**

Where the Faculty Doctoral Committee does not find that a *prima facie* case has been made for candidature, the Faculty should provide feedback to the candidate (including a copy of the Expert Commentator's Report Form) and invite them to re-apply at a later date. The application reading fee will not be returned.

The acceptance of a *prima facie* case by the Faculty is not a guarantee that a PhD will be subsequently awarded to a candidate.

**8. The applicant will have a maximum of 6 months from the official notification of the outcome above to start their registration for the degree of PhD on the Basis of Prior Published Works**

**9. The candidate will have a maximum of 12 months from the official start date of their registration to prepare their final submission for examination.**

The final submission (henceforth referred to as the research portfolio) must display coherence and progression, and evidence that the candidate has:

- personally made a systematic study;
- shown independent, critical and original powers; and
- made a distinct contribution to knowledge.
- 

In addition to the research outputs, the research portfolio must also include an integrative summary written by the candidate of between 7500-15000 words. The purpose of the integrative summary is to provide a critical overview and synthesis of the research outputs submitted and their contribution to the discipline.

In preparing the research portfolio, the candidate will be advised and assisted by a Director of Studies (DoS) who is experienced in the subject area, and who has successfully supervised at least two doctoral level degrees to completion. The DoS is likely to be the person who provided a supporting statement for the prima facie application but the Faculty may assign another relevant staff member if they are no longer available. The Faculty will also appoint a second supervisor.

Candidates may apply for interruptions or extensions to their registration as per the Research Degrees Handbook. In the case of the latter, extension year fees will be payable (pro rata) according to the current fee levels (as per part time Band 1) on the University website.

**10. The Director of Studies will nominate the examining team approximately four months prior to final submission. Normal research degrees examination arrangements, as set out in regulation AST9.4 (items 2-5), will apply.**

The criteria and process for the appointment of the examination team are set out in the Research Degrees Handbook. The two examiners will each assess the thesis independently, each attend the viva voce examination, and negotiate the examination outcome together. The examination team is formally approved by the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee.

Tuition fees (as indicated on the University website for this degree) must be paid for the entire year, even if the candidate submits the thesis for examination in less than twelve months.

**11. The candidate is assessed by means of a research portfolio of published works, which must include a written element (integrative summary), and a**

***viva voce* examination attended by all the examiners. The language of the examination shall be English, unless otherwise approved by the Faculty Doctoral Committee.**

Examiners should consult and follow the University's 'Notes of Guidance for Examiners of Research Degrees' and (if applicable) 'The Role & Responsibility of Independent Chairs at Viva Voce Examinations of Research Degrees', both available in the Research Degrees Handbook.

**12. The examiners will determine whether the works submitted demonstrate that the candidate has undertaken study and research at least comparable with that required to prepare a PhD thesis in the same field.**

**13. Following the examination, the examiners can make one of the following recommendations, based on the [QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#) at the relevant level:**

- a. Pass: the degree be awarded. The examiners may provide advisory guidance on editorial corrections to the thesis, such as minor typographical or grammatical errors, or**
- b. Corrections: the submission is satisfactory in substance, but the examiners have identified shortcomings in the shaping or articulation of the research. Corrections to be made to the satisfaction of one or all of the examiners by six months from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination, or**
- c. Compensatory award: the PhD is not to be awarded but an MPhil can be awarded subject to the presentation of the submission being amended to the satisfaction of the internal examiner (or Chair, where there is no internal examiner) by one month from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination, or**
- d. Fail: the degree not to be awarded.**

Corrections and amendments can only be made to the integrative summary, abstract, front matter and bibliography. The published works are already in the public domain, and therefore cannot be revised following examination.

If the examiners recommend outcome (a) – Pass: the degree be awarded – the examining team may provide advisory guidance on editorial corrections such as typographical or grammatical errors. Where a student wishes to follow this guidance, all editorial corrections



must be made to the integrative summary before submitting an electronic copy of the research portfolio to the University repository (see 17, below).

In the case of disagreement amongst the examiners, the decision shall be deferred and the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee shall appoint an additional external examiner who will consider both the submission and the reports of all the original examiners, and come to a recommendation. After this evidence is compiled, an ad hoc meeting of the Sub-Committee will arbitrate and come to a decision on the outcome of the examination.

**14. Formal written confirmation of the outcome of the examination, including a list of corrections (if relevant) will be issued to the candidate by the Doctoral College on receipt of the examiners' report form(s).**

If the examiners recommend Corrections (outcome b), or Compensatory award with amendments (outcome c), the corrections must be made and submitted to the Doctoral College by the relevant date, depending on the outcome. These will be distributed to the relevant examiners (or Chair, if relevant) for consideration.

**15. Possible outcomes after the submission of Corrections (outcome b) are:**

- a. Pass: the degree to be awarded,**
- b. Corrections: the submission is satisfactory in substance, but the examiners have identified shortcomings in the shaping or articulation of the research. Corrections to be made to the satisfaction of one or all of the examiners by six months from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination, or**
- c. Compensatory award: the PhD is not to be awarded but an MPhil can be awarded subject to the presentation of the submission being amended to the satisfaction of the examiners by one month from the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the examination, or**
- d. Fail: the degree not to be awarded and the candidate not be permitted to be re-examined.**

Examiners must submit a completed Corrections Report Form to the Doctoral College with their recommended outcome. If the corrections are not completed to the satisfaction of the examiner(s) on the first attempt, outcome (b) should be recommended, with a list of remaining requirements. If the corrections are then submitted for a second time, and still not to the satisfaction of the examiners, outcome (c) or (d) should be recommended.

**16. A candidate who fails to submit corrections by the date set by the examiners, without formal approval, shall be regarded as having failed the examination and the recommendations of the examiners shall lapse.**

Extensions can only be granted with the agreement of the examiners, who will also be consulted on the period of extension if approved.

**17. An award will be made only when the electronic copy of the research portfolio has been submitted to the University repository, and the submission approved by the Doctoral College.**

Candidates should submit the electronic copy of the research portfolio within 60 days of the official notice of the outcome. The published works will need to be included as either 'green'/open access copies or as a list of DOIs, ISBNs, etc, if copyright restrictions apply. Otherwise, copyright permissions must be obtained and evidence of such presented in the submission.

**18. A candidate to whom the degree is not awarded may submit a fresh application at any time, provided that such an application includes additional works based upon further study and research.**

A new application will need to be made following Regulation 4 above ('Applications'), and all fees paid.

**19. The academic appeals procedure, as set out in regulation AST11, shall apply.**

### **AWD3 Posthumous and Aegrotat Awards**

This regulation applies to all students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partner institutions, unless a non-standard regulation has been formally approved.

**1. An aegrotat award for incomplete study may be conferred in exceptional circumstances, such as in cases where a student's ability to complete an award is permanently compromised by severe illness, and the Board (or Doctoral College Board, for research degree students) is satisfied that**

**the student would have qualified for an award had the circumstances not existed.**

**All taught awards are available as aegrotat awards, unless prohibited by professional body.**

**Postgraduate research degrees may be considered for an aegrotat award if the research is in its final stages, or if the student is unable to submit for oral examination in the usual way due to irreversible health problems.**

The process and criteria for aegrotat research degrees are available in the [Research Degrees Handbook](#).

An aegrotat award is a final exit award, and will be regarded as the conclusion of a student's study on a particular course. A student will not be able to re-enrol on later stages of a programme once an Aegrotat award in that programme has been agreed.

Formally the student must confirm in writing their acceptance of the award but it is understood that there may be circumstances in which this is not possible (e.g. in the case of students whose medical circumstances make it impossible for them to give informed consent). In such cases the written authorisation of the Award Assessment Board Chair (or Chair of the Doctoral College Board, for research degree students), confirming the circumstances in which the award is made, will be sufficient for the granting of the award.

**2. Aegrotat awards are not granted with Commendation, Distinction or classification.**

Where an 'aegrotat' award is made, the term 'aegrotat' will appear on the award document e.g. Aegrotat Bachelor of Arts.

**3. The University, on the recommendation of the Award Assessment Board, may award and/or cause to be conferred, a taught degree, diploma or certificate posthumously, provided that the Award Assessment Board has considered the student's academic record including performance in previous assessments in the University, and is satisfied that the student had passed or, if the student had not yet completed all assessments, that had the student taken the remaining assessments, the student would have passed.**

**4. Research degrees may be awarded posthumously on the basis of research materials completed by a candidate, compiled for examination by the Director of Studies.**

The process and criteria for the award of posthumous research degrees are set out in the [Research Degrees Handbook](#).

## **AWD4 Certification of Awards and Supplementary Certification**

### **1. Certificate of Award**

**The Certificate of Award granted under the University's Regulations will record:**

- **the name of University of Plymouth and where appropriate of the partner institution at which the student was registered;**
- **the student's full name;**
- **the award;**
- **the title of the programme (taught) / thesis (PGR);**
- **an approved endorsement, where appropriate, that:**
  - **the award is made with a distinction in one or more spoken elements for a foreign language course.**

**The certificate will bear the signature of the Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Registrar and will be prepared by the Exams and Awards Office.**

It is a legal requirement that the University can only issue a certificate bearing the student's official name at the time of qualification. The University will not re-issue a certificate if a student changes their name subsequently, except in the case of gender reassignment. A student who has lost a certificate of award should contact the Exams and Awards Office for the appropriate form of application for a duplicate.

### **2. Transcript**

**A Transcript will be issued to all students registered on taught programmes. This will normally be an electronic version.**

**The Transcript will indicate:**

- **the student's full name;**
- **the academic year of study to which the transcript refers and date of issue;**
- **the elements of study, with details of level and mark/grade achieved together with the credit points awarded.**

**The Transcript should bear the official University crest.**

The Transcript will incorporate a brief explanation of the University's Credit system and may be used to negotiate admission with credit to another programme of study either within the University or at another institution.

Official (historical) transcripts are produced by the Exams and Awards office for former students and bear the official office stamp and signature of the officer who produced the document.

### **3. Diploma Supplement**

**A Diploma Supplement will be issued to all students registered on research degree programmes.**

**The Diploma Supplement will indicate:**

- **the student's full name and date of birth;**
- **information identifying the qualification, including title of the thesis, the supervisory team, and the names of any collaborating institution(s); and**
- **information on the level of the qualification, including the level of the qualification, the mode of study, official length of the programme and completion date.**

Students also have the opportunity to complete supplementary details about their research outputs, and any research skills training they have completed.

### **4. Prize certificates**

**A certificate will be issued to any student who has been awarded an academic prize. The certificate will indicate:**

- **the student's full name;**
- **the name of the prize**
- **the title of the student's programme, if appropriate.**

Prize certificates will be produced by the Faculty Office or approved partner institution.

## AWD5 Academic Dress

This regulation applies to all students at University of Plymouth sites of delivery, and in all UK and international partner institutions, unless non-standard regulations have been formally approved.

The University has adopted the following styles and colours for the academic dress for its awards.

### 1. Gowns

**HNC, HND, other Certificates and Diplomas, Foundation Degrees, Bachelor's Degrees (all Faculties), Master of Engineering, Master of Chemistry, Master of Geology, Master of Mathematics, Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas**

Black traditional Oxford style with pointed sleeves

**Master's Degrees – including Honorary Awards (all Faculties)**

Black traditional Cambridge style with long hanging sleeves

**MPhil**

As for Master's degrees but with front facing trimmed with University terracotta silk

**Doctorates (all Faculties)**

Terracotta traditional Cambridge shape in all wool Panama. Fronts and sleeves trimmed with University blue silk.

**Higher Doctorates (including Honorary Awards)**

Terracotta traditional Cambridge shape in all wool Panama. Fronts and sleeves trimmed with University blue silk with half inch silver oakleaf lace.

**Vice-Chancellor**

Blue damask trimmed one-and-a-half inch silver oakleaf lace on facings, cape collar and wings trimmed terracotta, sleeves and wings trimmed half inch silver oakleaf lace. Three terracotta chevrons on bottom of sleeves. Sleeves trimmed with silver ornaments.

**Chair of Board of Governors**

Robe as Vice-Chancellor's but no silver lace at bottom of sleeves. Facings and cape collar trimmed one-and-a-half inch silver oakleaf lace. Sleeve cuts and wings trimmed half inch silver oakleaf lace. Sleeves trimmed with silver ornaments.

## 2. Hoods

**HNC, HND and Other Certificates and Diplomas (worn by holders of HNC, HND, Certificates, Certificates of Higher Education, Certificate in Education (FE), Continuing Education Diploma, Diploma of Higher Education, Diploma in Professional Studies)**

Simple shape blue outer part lined black and terracotta.

### **Foundation Degree**

Blue outer full shape, lined blue, cowl edged terracotta and blue twisted cord.

### **Bachelor's Degrees (all Faculties)**

Blue outer full shape, partly lined with terracotta silk

### **Master of Engineering/Chemistry/Geology/Mathematics**

Blue outer full shape, partly lined with terracotta silk. Top edged with half inch black ribbon.

### **Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas**

As for Bachelor's Degrees with one inch silver ribbon added above terracotta silk.

### **Master's Degrees (including Honorary Awards (all Faculties))**

Full shape blue fully lined and edged quarter inch all round with terracotta silk.

### **MPhil**

As for Master's Degrees

### **Doctorates (all Faculties)**

Full shape University terracotta silk outer, fully lined and edged one inch all round with blue Panama

### **Higher Doctorates (including Honorary Awards)**

Full shape University terracotta silk outer, fully lined and edged one-and-a-half inches all round with blue Panama. Trimmed with half inch silver oakleaf lace

## 3. Hats

**HNC, HND, Other Certificates and Diplomas, Foundation Degrees, Bachelor's Degrees, Master of Engineering/Chemistry/Geology/ Mathematics, Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas, Master's Degrees (All Faculties) including MPhil and Honorary Awards**

Black cloth mortar board

**Doctorates (all Faculties)**

Black cloth Tudor bonnet with terracotta cord and tassel

**Higher Doctorates (including Honorary Awards)**

Black velvet Tudor bonnet with terracotta and silver cord and tassel

**Vice-Chancellor**

Blue damask rigid mortar board trimmed with one inch silver oakleaf lace. Silver tassel and button

**Chair of Board of Governors**

Blue damask rigid mortar board. Silver tassel and button.

**4. Marshalls' Robes**

Black polyester robes with facings trimmed in University terracotta silk.



## Appendix 1: Portfolio of Awards

The following awards are currently granted by the University:

- Foundation Certificate
- Certificate
- Certificate of Professional Development (Major Study) – an award which reflects CPD activity across a range of areas.
- Certificate of Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS)
- Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)
- Certificate in Education (CertEd)
- Diploma
- Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)
- Diploma in Professional Studies (DPS)
- Higher National Certificate (HNC)
- Higher National Diploma (HND)
- Foundation Degree (FdA, FdSc)
- (Unclassified) Bachelor's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree with Honours
- Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
- Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (BMBS)
- Bachelor of Medical Science (BMedSci) (exit award only)
- Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)
- Bachelor of Oral Health Studies (BOHS) (exit award only)
- Master of Architecture (MArch)
- Master of Engineering (MEng)
- Master of Geology (MGeol)

Both awards granted under licence  
from Edexcel

- Master of Mathematics (MMath)
- Master of Nursing (MNurs)
- Master of Occupational Therapy (MOccTh)
- Master of Osteopathy (MOst)
- Master of Physiotherapy (MPhysio)
- Master of Psychology (MPsych)
- Master of Statistics (MStat)
- Graduate Certificate
- Graduate Diploma
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert)
- Certificate of Architectural Professional Practice (CAPP)
- Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip)
- Diploma in Management Studies (DMS)
- Master of Arts (MA)
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Executive Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Clinical Education (MClined)
- Master of Clinical Research (MClinRes)
- Master of Education (MEd)
- Master of Fine Art (MFA)
- Master of Laws (LLM)
- Master of Research (MRes)

- Master of Science (MSc)
- Master of Teaching and Learning (MTL)
- Research Masters (ResM)
- Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)
- Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)
- Doctor of Education (EdD)
- Doctor of Engineering (EngD)
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- Doctor of Laws (LLD)
- Doctor of Letters (DLitt)
- Doctor of Medicine (MD)
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Doctor of Science (DSc)
- Doctor of Technology (DTech)

*Honorary Doctorates*

- Honorary Doctor of Arts (DArts)
- Honorary Doctor of Business (DBus)
- Honorary Doctor of Dentistry (DD)
- Honorary Doctor of Education (DEd)
- Honorary Doctor of Engineering (DEng)
- Honorary Doctor of Environmental Science (DEnv)
- Honorary Doctor of Health (DH)
- Honorary Doctor of Humanities (DHum)
- Honorary Doctor of Letters (DLitt)
- Honorary Doctor of Management (DMgmt)

- Honorary Doctor of Marine Science (DMS)
- Honorary Doctor of Medicine (DM)
- Honorary Doctor of Music (DMus)
- Honorary Doctor of Science (DSc)
- Honorary Doctor of Social Work
- Honorary Doctor of Technology (DTech)
- Honorary Doctor of Theology (DTheol)
- Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD)

In line with regulation [AWD2](#), awards may be made as aegrotat awards, unless prohibited by professional body.

## **Appendix 2: Calculation of Degree Classification for students who completed Level 4 in its entirety before the 2014-15 academic year.**

Each module is either awarded a mark out of 100 (marks held to two decimal places) or designated pass/fail. The aggregate percentage mark will be calculated using the weightings:

Levels 4 : 5 : 6 will be weighted 0 : 3 : 7

If the student's aggregate percentage mark falls within the boundaries of the classifications defined below, they are entitled to that award.

First Class Honours 70% or above  
Second Class Honours, Upper Division 60%-69%  
Second Class Honours, Lower Division 50%-59%  
Third Class Honours 40%-49%

If the aggregate percentage achieved by a candidate is not more than 3.0 percentage points below a classification band, the Board must invoke the following alternative classification methods:

**Level 6 aggregate:** The Award Assessment Board will award an Honours Degree with the higher classification to a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band provided that the student's aggregate percentage at Level 6 is in the higher classification band.

**Module profile:** The Award Assessment Board will award an Honours Degree with the higher classification to a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band, provided that more than half of the student's Level 5 and 6 credits are in the higher classification band. Each Level 6 credit is double weighted (compared with a Level 5 credit) for this purpose.

Where the module profile is based on Level 6 performance only, a student whose aggregate percentage is not more than 3.0 percentage points below the next classification band will be required to have achieved more than half of the Level 6 credits in the higher classification band in order to be awarded an Honours Degree with the higher classification.

<b>Version number</b> 202122 v1 .0	<b>Status</b> Final	<b>Owned by:</b> Academic Policy and Quality Manager
<b>Summary of any amendments:</b> See <a href="#">Summary of Recent Changes</a>		
<b>Document objectives:</b> To describe the University's full academic regulations, effective for the academic year 2021-22.		
<b>Intended Recipients:</b> Students and staff		
<b>Approving Body and Date Approved</b>		Senate, July 2016
<b>Date of Issue</b>		This version – September 2021
<b>Review Date:</b>		Summer 2022
<b>Contact for review:</b>		<b>Job title:</b> Academic Policy and Quality Manager

Version	Date	Author(s)	Replaces	Comment
2016-17 v1.0	September 2016	Kate Ellis		New document, following the ARSC review of academic regulations during the 2015-16 academic year.
2017-18 v1.0	September 2017	Kate Ellis	2016-17 v1.0	Integrated PGR regs. Nomenclature changes for Registry and Doctoral College.
2017-18 v2.0	January 2018	Kate Ellis	2017-18 v1.0	ECs policy URL corrected Fitness to Study title updated Appeal date included AST4, para 4, removed
2017-18 v3.0	March 2018	Kate Ellis	2017-18 v2.0	External Examiners' guidance URL corrected Intercalated degrees clarified in ADM1 and AWD1
2018-19 v1.0	September 2018	Kate Ellis	2017-18 v3.0	Significant revisions: APEL currency Rules for passing a module PGR examination outcomes Exam and Academic Offences
2018-19 v2.0	March 2018	Kate Ellis	2018-19 v1.0	Introduction of 2-stage appeals procedure

				Revised Assessment Offences regulations
2018-19 v3.0	April 2019	Kate Ellis	2018-19 v2.0	Matters of clarification in sections B, C and D. Addition of MNurs, and removal of MS, from Portfolio of Awards
2019-20 v1.0	September 2019	Kate Ellis	2018-19 v3.0	Significant revisions: Research misconduct procedures Fit-to-sit policy RDC1 Project Approval criteria
2019-20 v2.0	February 2020	Donna Strickland	2019-20 v.10	Amendment to ECs - Removal of requirement for one form per assessment for self-certified claims and expectation a student will be fit-to-sit or complete assessments within 5 working days of the circumstance starting for self-certified claims.
2019-20 v3.0	March 2020	Donna Strickland	2019-20 v2.0	Amendments to clarify the procedure in the event of failure of a module with Pass/Fail elements
2019-20 v4.0	July 2020	Donna Strickland	2019-20 v3.0	Amendment to capping of modules where referrals are taken as mixed attempts due to valid ECs for one element
2020-21 v1.0	September 2020	Donna Strickland	2019-20 v4.0	
2021-22 v1.0	September 2021	Donna Strickland	2020-21 v1.0	Updates to URLs throughout, inclusion of PhD by Published Prior Works, inclusion of Professional Doctorate regulations, updates to APL regulations, updates to EC regulations, amendments to format of SAPs/AABs