

## THE ARTS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AT BOURNEMOUTH

### HE Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations

---

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The regulations which follow apply to all students undertaking a postgraduate taught award of the Arts University College. All staff involved in the delivery of a postgraduate taught course should be familiar with this document, and it is the responsibility of the Dean to ensure that all relevant staff comply with these provisions.
- 1.2 The University College aims to render the assessment process explicit and transparent, to credit achievement where it occurs, and to give due recognition to transferable skills and related competencies. The regulatory framework which follows sets out the requirements for awards; and also identifies the consequences of failure of units.

#### 2. Assessment Procedure

- 2.1 Each unit will have a clear statement of assessment components, assessment criteria and methodology appropriate to its level, learning outcomes and length of study, and a timetable for assessment.
- 2.2 The assessment component is the evidence to be produced to demonstrate that the learning outcomes for the unit have been achieved. This may take a variety of forms (for instance, an artefact, a written report, a performance, a presentation, or a research file). Particular aspects of the learning may be weighted to emphasise their significance.
- 2.3 The manner in which components are to be assessed is made clear in the validated unit descriptor, which is included within the Course Handbook.
- 2.4 Each unit is assessed on completion and given a percentage mark. The percentage mark is not an absolute judgement of performance, but an indication of achievement of the learning outcomes, assessed against the Grading Matrix. The University College has adopted a “notched” marking scheme whereby only certain marks are used within each grade, to support consistency and reliability within the assessment process.
- 2.5 Each assessment component must be passed for the unit to be passed. Where an assessment component contains several elements (such as a portfolio submission which includes research, a case study and a self-evaluation), the elements are not marked individually and hence do not have to be passed.
- 2.6 All unit assessment will normally occur within the duration of the unit (other than where student work is liable to Referral or Retake) and hence feedback is provided to students throughout the academic year. Students will be notified in cases where an extension to the marking period may occur.

#### 3. Marks and Credits

- 3.1 The Credit/Mark Scheme for postgraduate taught awards is as follows:
  - i) the pass mark for all units is 40%
  - ii) an overall unit mark of 40% or more gains full credit
  - iii) an overall unit mark of 0-39% is a fail and gains no credit
  - iv) passed units may not be retaken in order to improve a pass mark or gain additional credit<sup>1</sup>
  - v) no compensation is available on postgraduate taught awards.

---

<sup>1</sup> But see para 3.3 below

- 3.2 Students will normally only be permitted to register for the requisite credit for the award. There may be occasions where a student takes additional units following earlier failure, for example where the course offers optional units of study, or where a student intermits their studies and re-joins a course which has been altered through periodic review. This must be approved by the Course Leader, who must confirm that the proposed additional / alternative units will still enable the student to meet the level and course outcomes. The student will be permitted to be assessed in any approved alternative unit as if taking the unit for the first time.
- 3.3 If, exceptionally, a student is permitted to undertake additional credit as a result of earlier failure, the final award will be calculated using the highest marks in passed units to the total credit required for the award. Course regulations may specify units which must be included in the calculation (for instance, any which are essential to meet professional body requirements). Such regulations must be stated explicitly in the Course Handbook, and approved at validation or periodic review.

#### **4. AP(E)L and Credit**

- 4.1 Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning is the procedure whereby a student's previously acquired learning, outside of the University College, whether certificated or not, is recognised for the purposes of admission and progression. A student seeking recognition under this procedure should contact their Head of School for further information and advice, and refer to the University College AP(E)L policy.
- 4.2 The maximum credit awarded towards the fulfilment of any postgraduate taught award will not be more than one third of the total credit required for the award.
- 4.3 A student cannot be awarded with partial credit for a unit. A student may however be exempted from part of the assessment component(s) for a unit through AP(E)L. On achieving the remaining assessment component(s) the credit for the unit may then be awarded. The AP(E)L policy is available at: <http://intranet.aucb.ac.uk/academicregulations>

#### **5. Submission of Work**

- 5.1 All submission deadlines, including any staged submissions due during a unit, will be clearly stated to students in writing at the start of each unit.
- 5.2 Failure to submit any of the assessment components for a unit by the given deadline will be treated as failure of that unit unless mitigating circumstances apply (see section 14). A mark of 0% will automatically be entered on the student record.
- 5.3 Normally a piece of work produced by a student for assessment can only be submitted once in full or part fulfilment of the assessment components for a unit.
- 5.4 Exceptionally, within a unit, a piece of work may be submitted more than once if the assessment components allow for this. For example material used in a seminar presentation may also be used in an essay or other form of assignment. The student must secure the agreement of the Unit Leader where they intend to submit the same piece of work in order to meet separate assessment components. Failure to do so may result in the non-acceptance of the work.

#### **6. Double Marking of Work**

- 6.1 As part of good academic practice, student work at the University College will be routinely subjected to moderation of grades by a second academic marker in a process known as "double marking".
- 6.2 On postgraduate taught courses, a minimum of 50% of student work will be double marked, including all work initially adjudged to be at a grade of Fail.
- 6.3 All final project work will be subject to team marking.

- 6.4 At the end of each level, the marks for each unit are considered by the Postgraduate Examination Board, which includes external examiners. Marks are subject to moderation by the Board, which confirms the marks for each unit, and the award of credit. It then considers recommendations for progression and award.
- 7. Failure**
- 7.1 Credit can be retrieved from a failed unit by Referral or Retake, subject to the conditions set out in these Regulations (see section 7.2 (Referral) and section 7.3 (Retake) below). Referral relates to unit assessment and is the responsibility of the Postgraduate Examination Board with which the unit is associated. However, this responsibility can be devolved to the Board's internal members as appropriate. The opportunity to offer a student the chance to redeem failure through Retakes as a result of failed Referral is the responsibility of the Progression and Awards Board, on the recommendation of the Postgraduate Examination Board.
- 7.2 Referral
- 7.2.1 Referral gives a student an additional opportunity to undertake work equivalent to the failed assessment component(s) of the unit. This involves the completion of additional work or the repeat of the component(s) in order to secure the learning outcomes of the failed unit. The opportunity to redeem failure through Referral is only given once for each failed unit.
- 7.2.2 Referral is available for all failed units, except where a student has been barred from undertaking a referral as a penalty for academic misconduct.
- 7.2.3 Referral will normally take place at the point of failure (ie the unmoderated notification of unit results). The terms of Referral are confirmed by the Postgraduate Examination Board (or by Chair's action) taking into consideration the recommendation of the relevant Unit Leader. The Referral must relate substantively to the content of the failed unit; referral tasks cannot be given for units not taken by a student. The time allowed for Referrals will in all cases be standard, agreed centrally and consistent across all awards.
- 7.2.4 A student will never be given a deadline for resubmission which permits less than four weeks for the work to be retrieved.
- 7.2.5 The Postgraduate Examination Board must confirm that submitted Referral work is satisfactory before credit can be awarded. This confirmation will be given as soon as possible, and students will be notified of the date their results will be available.
- 7.2.6 Successful completion of a Referral for any assessment component gains a pass mark of 40% for the unit. Where the Referral mark does not improve upon the previous mark, the previous mark will stand.
- 7.3 Retake
- 7.3.1 Retake provides a student with one final opportunity to retrieve a failed unit. A Retake may be offered by the Progression and Awards Board, on the recommendation of the Postgraduate Examination Board, to enable a student to meet the requirements for award.
- 7.3.2 In determining its recommendation, the Postgraduate Examination Board will consider the overall profile of the student as indicated by the unit results achieved. The Board may consider evidence about how the student has engaged with the course, including patterns of attendance and the submission of work.
- 7.3.3 To ensure consistency of approach, the deadline for all such Retakes will be set centrally by the University College, and will apply to all students.
- 7.3.4 Where the Board does not consider that the work is retrievable alongside ongoing study, or where the work must be retrieved before the next units commence because of the pre-requisite learning, the student will normally be required to intermit to retrieve the outstanding units. This may be with or without attendance, as determined by the Board. (This includes

situations where work is outstanding following deferral, and is intended to ensure that a student is not over-burdened).

- 7.3.5 If a student has failed to submit any work for assessment on both previous occasions, a Retake may not be offered and the student's studies will be terminated.
- 7.3.6 The Postgraduate Examination Board must confirm that submitted Retake work is satisfactory before credit can be awarded. This confirmation will be given as soon as possible, and students will be notified of the date their results will be available.
- 7.3.7 Successful completion of a Retake for any assessment component gains a pass mark of 40% for the unit. Where the Retake mark does not improve upon the previous mark, the previous mark will stand.

## **8. Failure of an award**

- 8.1 A student's course of study may be terminated by the Postgraduate Examination Board on academic grounds when a candidate fails to meet the requirement for award.
- 8.2 Where a student has achieved the credit requirements for an award lower than their target qualification, the Postgraduate Examination Board will normally recommend this award, in accordance with section 9 below.
- 8.3 A course of study may also be terminated for non-academic reasons, such as breaching specific University College, course or general regulations covering student conduct. The non-payment of fees or other University College debt may also result in the termination of studies. Students should refer to the respective regulations for further details.

## **9. Requirements for awards**

- 9.1 The credit requirements for the University College's postgraduate taught awards are listed below.
  - 9.1.1 Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert)  
A student must have achieved:
    - i) a minimum 60 Credits at Level 7;
    - ii) any specific requirements of the course as outlined in the Course Handbook.
  - 9.1.2 Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip)  
A student must have achieved:
    - i) a minimum 120 Credits at Level 7;
    - ii) any specific requirements of the course as outlined in the Course Handbook.
  - 9.1.3 Master's Degree (MA)  
A student must have achieved:
    - i) 180 Credits, of which a minimum of 120 must be at Level 7;
    - ii) any specific requirements of the course as outlined in the Course Handbook.
  - 9.1.4 Master of Architecture (MArch)  
A student must have achieved:
    - i) 240 Credits, of which a minimum of 180 must be at Level 7
    - ii) any specific requirements of the course as outlined in the Course Handbook.

## **10. Classification**

- 10.1 A Master's Degree with Distinction or Master of Architecture with Distinction may be awarded. The criteria are as follows:

- 10.2 Only units at Level 7 contribute towards the determination of a Distinction. To achieve a Distinction, a student must achieve an overall average unit mark of 65% (with Level 7 units weighted according to their size), and a mark of 70% or above in a majority of credits at Level 7 (with units weighted according to their size).

## **11. Withdrawal**

- 11.1 A student wishing to change their course of study must consult both their current Head of School and the Head of School of the course to which they wish to transfer. Discussions will take place to ensure that any such change is available and the consequences of the change are fully understood. This may include a requirement that the student undertake an additional unit, or dedicated project work, to ensure that the discipline level outcomes can be achieved, and the student properly prepared for subsequent units of study within the discipline.
- 11.2 If agreement is obtained from both Course Leaders and the student wishes to proceed with the change, an internal transfer form must be completed by both Course Leaders, signed by the receiving Head of School and a copy sent to Registry.
- 11.3 If a student withdraws from their studies at the University College before completing the course for which they are registered, the Postgraduate Examination Board at its next meeting will automatically consider whether a student has earned the requisite credit for an award, and will make such an award in all cases where specific requirements have been met. The student will be notified of the award in writing.

## **12. Intermission**

- 12.1 The regulations relating to intermission are concerned with the integrity of the academic award, and the coherence of the student experience. They provide a supportive framework which enables student achievement, whilst acknowledging the importance of a structured, progressive learning experience.
- 12.2 Academic intermission offers students the opportunity to take a break from continuous study in order to redeem outstanding failures, or assessment which has been deferred. The Postgraduate Examination Board will require a student to intermit when it considers that it is in the student's interest to concentrate on this outstanding learning before continuing to the next units of the course.
- 12.3 Non-academic intermission occurs when a student chooses to intermit, usually for personal reasons not associated with academic performance. Students seeking the opportunity to intermit for non-academic reasons must seek the approval of their Head of School. All such requests must be made in writing to the Head of School at the earliest point possible. Failure to inform the Head of School may result in permanent withdrawal from studies.
- 12.4 Postgraduate students may intermit on no more than one occasion. An intermission may not normally be for more than one academic year at a time within a single period of registration; intermissions for more than one year are exceptional. If an extension to this period is required, the student should discuss this with the Head of School at the conclusion of the first year of intermission, and present any further supporting evidence. The decision about whether to agree a second academic year of intermission is at the sole discretion of the Postgraduate Examination Board, which is required to consider the coherence of the overall educational experience, as well as the students' circumstances,
- 12.5 No student may intermit for a period of longer than two years. If, following two years of intermission, the student does not return to the course, he/she will be deemed to have withdrawn.
- 12.6 If a student intermits having commenced study of one or more units but not completed them, no credit will be awarded for these units. Upon their return to the course of study, the student would normally be expected to repeat the whole of the uncompleted unit(s). The University College cannot guarantee that a unit or units available at the point of intermission will be available at the point of rejoining, and an alternative unit may have to be undertaken, as directed by the Head of School.

- 12.7 Students may be encouraged to intermit if it is clear that health problems are affecting their ability to take full advantage of their course of study. When the University College has evidence that a student's health is profoundly affecting the safety and well-being of the surrounding community, the student may be required to intermit.
- 12.8 Students who seek or are required to intermit their studies for medical reasons will be required to provide evidence that they are fit to resume their studies before they rejoin the course. In exceptional cases, where it is clear that the student is unfit to rejoin the course for medical reasons, this may result in the termination of studies.

### **13. Failure of an Award**

- 13.1 A course of studies may be terminated by the Postgraduate Examination Board on academic grounds when a student has failed the requirement for the award, including where one or more units has been irretrievably failed and no more options remain open to the student.
- 13.2 At termination, credit for all passed units is retained. Where a student has achieved the credit requirements for an award lower than their target qualification, the Postgraduate Examination Board will normally recommend this award, in accordance with section 9 above.
- 13.3 A course of study may also be terminated for non-academic reasons, such as breaching specific University College, course or general regulations covering student conduct. The non-payment of fees or other University College debt may also result in the termination of studies. Students should refer to the respective regulations for further details.
- 13.4 If a student is awarded a PGCert or PGDip as a result of failure to retrieve credit following referral and/or retake, or as a result of plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct, they may not resubmit for an MA Award.

### **14. Mitigating Circumstances**

- 14.1 'Mitigating circumstances' is the term given to circumstances in a student's personal life, away from the AUCB, which impact on his/her performance either directly (such as an illness or injury), or indirectly (by requiring his/her attention and commitment for an extended period of time).
- 14.2 Students are responsible for managing their learning (including assessment) throughout the duration of their studies. The University College recognises that illness and difficult or distressing life events do occur, but considers it a normal part of everyday life to have to manage these, and continue with work or study.
- 14.3 The University College does ensure that students suffering from serious illness and other forms of exceptional and unforeseen interference with their academic performance are treated fairly during the learning and assessment process. The policy for dealing with mitigating circumstances is available at:  
<http://intranet.aucb.ac.uk/academicregulations>

### **15. Aegrotat**

- 15.1 A student who has not met the requirements for their target award because of serious illness or death may be offered an Aegrotat award by the Progression and Awards Board on receipt of such a recommendation from the Postgraduate Examination Board. An Aegrotat award will only be offered where the circumstances are deemed to have prevented the student from making submissions for the purpose of assessment, and where there is sufficient evidence at the appropriate level that, in the absence of these circumstances, the student would have completed the level satisfactorily. An Aegrotat award is not classified.
- 15.2 If the student accepts the Aegrotat award, they may re-submit for the award within five years of receipt of the original award. Where a re-submission is requested by the student, the Progression and Awards Board, on the advice of the Postgraduate Examination Board, will stipulate the terms and conditions (including any attendance requirement) of the re-

submission. Requests to make a re-submission must be made in writing to the Deputy Principal.

15.3 Students should note that the University College cannot guarantee that a unit or units available at the point of accepting the Aegrotat will be available at the point of wishing to make a re-submission.

15.4 Where a resubmission for the higher award has been recommended by the Postgraduate Examination Board, the student must surrender the Aegrotat award prior to the new award being conferred.

## **16. Academic Misconduct**

16.1 The University College expects the highest standards of academic integrity from its students. Any form of academic misconduct, including plagiarism, constitutes a breach of the University College's Assessment Regulations, and as such will be treated very seriously.

16.2 Students found to have breached the regulations by behaving dishonestly will be dealt with in accordance with the University College's Academic Dishonesty (Cheating) Policy. This is available at: <http://intranet.aucb.ac.uk/academicregulations>

## **17. Examination Boards**

17.1 All postgraduate units are the responsibility of a named Postgraduate Examination Board, which confirms the mark achieved by each student on each unit within its responsibility.

17.2 Postgraduate Examination Boards exercise responsibility for the conduct of all assessments leading to an award of credit for a unit and for making recommendations on student awards. They also consider the status of any student who has not met the criteria for awards, or for unit failure, and determine whether further opportunities to retrieve outstanding work should be given, in accordance with these Regulations. The Postgraduate Examination Board meets at least once in each academic year, and may devolve responsibility for aspects of the assessment process to its internal members, subject to report to the full Postgraduate Examination Board.

17.3 To discharge the University College's obligation to ensure consistency of standards not simply within a course but also across all similar courses at the University College, membership of each Postgraduate Examination Board is supplemented by an independent member appointed by the Chair of ASQ. This independent member may be the Director of Academic Services, Academic Registrar or a Head of School from the other Faculty. The role of the independent member is to ensure that the University College regulations are applied consistently across all courses. This process also allows the University College to make consistent decisions for each student.

17.4 The Progression and Awards Board considers the recommendations from all the Postgraduate Examination Boards. It confirms that the regulations have been followed and applied consistently across all awards, and confirms decisions on retrieval and award. Individual recommendations on progression and award are made to the Principal, as Chair of Academic Board, for approval.

17.5 External Examiners will be expected to attend the appropriate Postgraduate Examination Boards. Each postgraduate course has at least one External Examiner; the number is determined by the breadth of the course content of the units and the number of students undertaking those units.

17.6 The regulations governing the formal remit and operation of the University College's External Examiner system are available in the HE Quality Assurance Handbook.

17.7 The terms of reference and constitution of the Postgraduate Examination Board and the Progression and Awards Board are available at: <http://intranet.aucb.ac.uk/committeesandminutes.aspx>

## **18. Publication of Results**

- 18.1 Following confirmation by the Progression and Awards Board, results are forwarded to the Principal as Chair of Academic Board for approval, after which time the results are published. The Principal may, at his/her direction, devolve this authority to the Deputy Principal. The date and time of the publication of results will be notified to students in advance.
- 18.2 All graduating students will be provided with an individual transcript of results detailing their performance on each unit of their course.
- 18.3 Continuing students are able to access their results on-line; in addition students with outstanding work to complete will be contacted by letter. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they access their results.

## **19. Recording Student Achievement**

- 19.1 On completion of each unit a student will receive notification of the provisional unit assessment mark. Students are responsible for ensuring that they obtain their assessment marks. Any mark notified during the academic year will not have been confirmed, and may be subject to moderation by the Postgraduate Examination Board. All marks following the completion of a unit should therefore be viewed as indicative.
- 19.2 Upon successful completion of an award, a student will receive a Certificate, and a transcript of achievement. Students withdrawing prior to meeting the requirements of an award will receive a transcript of credits taken. If appropriate, a letter conferring the Certificate of Higher Education or Diploma of Higher Education will also be sent to the student (see section 9 above).

## **20. Outstanding debt to the University College**

- 20.1 Students must ensure that all debts (including rent, course dues, library fines, etc) owed to the University College are paid, and that all University College books and equipment are returned before the final Postgraduate Examination Board meeting. Continuing students with unpaid debt may be barred from enrolling and continuing their studies at the University College. The Certificate of graduates will be withheld until any outstanding debt is paid to the University College. Where a student has an outstanding debt to the University College, assessment should be submitted according to the deadline date given for that piece of work, but will not be marked until the debt has been settled. Where an assessment takes the form of a presentation or performance work, the student will be informed of the specific arrangements which apply.

## **21. Appeals against Assessment Outcomes**

- 21.1 A student may appeal against an assessment outcome in relation to:
- i. individual unit(s); and/or
  - ii. the decision of the Examination Board to require intermission; and/or
  - iii. a recommendation for a final award.
- 21.2 A student may appeal against an assessment outcome on one or more of the following grounds:
- that his/her performance was adversely affected by mitigating circumstances which he/she was previously unable or unwilling to divulge for valid reason(s)
  - that there was a significant administrative error in the conduct of the assessment
  - that the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the relevant and current course of study regulations.
- 21.3 The University College expects students to raise any concerns about their course, or their circumstances, as they arise. It will be exceptional for a retrospective claim to be considered if

it was not previously brought to the attention of the Course Leader, or a relevant member of the professional services.

- 21.4 There is no right of appeal against decisions of a Postgraduate Examination Board which are matters of academic judgement.
- 21.5 The HE Appeals Policy may be accessed at: <http://intranet.aucb.ac.uk/academicregulations>