

# Regulatory Framework and Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations



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## Section A: Purpose of the Regulatory Framework

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The purpose of the common framework is to set the parameters for course design and delivery at postgraduate taught and undergraduate level. It reflects the educational experience which the University considers most relevant and appropriate for its taught student body, and which responds to its Mission, resource strategy and size.

The objectives of the Regulatory Framework are:

- to enable all students to meet the intentions of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements;
- to ensure equivalence of academic experience for all students on courses leading to qualifications at the same level;
- to support the delivery of the University's PortfolioPlan;
- to provide a structure which enhances the student experience through the facilitation of collaboration and complementarity between courses.

In consequence, curriculum design will ensure that all students:

- are equipped with a critical, historical and theoretical framework appropriate to their subject area and to other relevant fields of practice;
- will gain an understanding of the professional and business context of their discipline and of the creative industries in general;
- will engage with ethical, social and cultural issues appropriate to the concept of a responsible practitioner;
- are aware of, and respond to, the demands of sustainability;
- will develop a breadth of knowledge and range of skills that will help them prepare for further study, and for employment opportunities within and beyond their specialist subject.

In consequence, the University has developed a set of precepts which govern all higher education awards. These precepts are set out in Section B. Section C covers the Assessment Regulations for awards at postgraduate and undergraduate level. The qualification descriptors and generic outcomes for each Higher Education Award are set out in Appendix A, and Appendix B covers the Verification of marks for undergraduate and postgraduate taught awards.

## Section B: Regulatory Framework for taught courses

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### 1. General principles: units, credits and levels

- 1 The Framework is based on self-contained blocks of learning, known as units, each of which has a coherent set of aims and learning outcomes, and associated assessment processes.
- 2 The result of each unit is expressed as a series of Learning Outcomes. Attainment of these is the objective of the unit; measuring their attainment is the purpose of assessment. The expression of unit objectives as Learning Outcomes, and how they are assessed, is included within each unit descriptor and published for students.
- 3 Whilst units may be related by sequence or content, each unit is essentially freestanding and results in an assessment of defined learning outcomes within the period of the unit.
- 4 All units are described in a common and consistent manner detailing their level, credit rating, aims, learning outcomes and assessment components. This information is contained within a formal unit descriptor, which is considered and approved at validation. There is no standard definition of delivery methods, except that these should be appropriate to the stated learning outcomes. In addition, the online Unit Information gives details about start date, the timing and nature of taught sessions, delivery methods, resource access, assessment component submission date, and the date for assessment feedback.
- 5 All units are credit-rated. The University's Credit Framework is compatible with other frameworks in operation across the UK HE sector, and accords with the HE Credit Framework<sup>1</sup>. Such compatibility helps to provide a standardised framework within which relative achievement can be considered.
- 6 'Notional learning hours' are used to describe the size of a unit, and indicate the length of learning time which it is estimated will be taken, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes. This includes all the study time for the unit including contact hours (lectures, demonstrations, seminars, tutorials etc), directed study, independent study, and assessment activity (including preparation). In accordance with practice across the UK HE sector, one credit is allocated for ten notional learning hours (and each full level of undergraduate study comprises 120 credits, or 1200 notional learning hours).
- 7 A student successfully completing any unit is awarded the full amount of credit assigned to that unit. The amount of credit is determined by the size of the unit, i.e. the amount of time required to complete the learning and assessment for the unit.
- 8 The award of credit indicates the achievement of the threshold standard or better within the unit. Credit is wholly allocated on a pass/fail basis. All learning outcomes must be passed for an overall pass to be awarded in the unit. There are no circumstances in which partial credit can be awarded for partial completion or success in particular components or elements of a unit.
- 9 Credit is not used for grading, but quantifies the volume of learning and is thus used to determine eligibility for progression or awards. The standard of achievement is signified through the assessment and classification scheme (see the relevant Assessment Regulations for detail).

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<sup>1</sup> see <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/standardsandquality/credit/default.asp>

- 10 Credit also facilitates transfer between courses and / or institutions by providing an accessible record of achievement. It permits transfer across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), with each credit worth 0.5 ECTS credits.
- 11 Once awarded, credit cannot be taken away or withdrawn as it represents the recognition of achievement. Even if students fail the course for which they are registered or do not complete it, they retain the credit gained and may use it as the basis for negotiating future study at the University or another provider. (The only exception to this is where the results of a unit are amended or annulled following a proven case of academic misconduct; see the relevant assessment regulations).
- 12 In accordance with the National HE Credit Framework, all units are attributed to a level (L4, L5, L6 or L7). The levels indicate the increasing complexity and demands of units as studies progress. The University has developed level descriptors, which conform to the descriptors in the HE Credit Framework, and indicate the typical requirements of units at each level.
- 13 The credit attaching to a unit of a given level is described as L4 credit, L5 credit, L6 credit or L7 credit.
- 14 The level descriptors give the general characteristics associated with study at each level and provide a template against which units (or the progression of units through a level) may be aligned. Whilst the complexity of content contributes to the assignment of a Level, the key determining factor in ascribing a level is the complexity of the assessment component. Hence, two units which appear similar in content may be at different levels if the assessment components differ.
- 15 If a student is admitted with advanced standing, or as a direct entrant to Level 5 or 6 of an undergraduate course, no credit is awarded against units or levels of study to which their previous certificated learning or experience is deemed equivalent, and which they are not required to take. General credit is awarded at the appropriate level of study.

## **2. General principles: named courses and named awards**

- 16 The standard of an award is safeguarded by regulations which define requirements for minimum amounts of credit necessary at a given level to satisfy the requirement for that award. The full list of available awards, and the associated credit requirements, is given at Appendix A.
- 17 All approved courses of study will lead to a named award. The naming of courses is the subject of a separate policy, available from the Quality and Standards team.
- 18 Parentheses may be used to provide an additional focus or specialism to a more generic award title. The element of the award indicated by the parentheses may either be delivered through dedicated units / teaching, or through the particular focus of the work undertaken. For undergraduate awards, this would normally comprise at least 60 credits at Level 6, and some study also at Level 5. Admission will be made to the broad course title, with specialist titles confirmed during Level 5 study, except where there are strong grounds to the contrary. For postgraduate awards, the specialism is likely to be delivered through the focus of work, and will be determined before the final 60 credits are commenced.
- 19 Subject to certain qualifying conditions, students who do not achieve their target qualification will normally be offered an intermediate (or "exit") award, which reflects the volume and level of credit they have successfully achieved during their period of study. Students will normally be considered for an intermediate award if they are withdrawing from the University, and have completed the requisite credit (see the relevant assessment regulations).

20 Courses will be designed in accordance with the general requirements for credit, and will stipulate any requirements specific to that course which students will have to meet in order to qualify for the award.

21 Postgraduate courses may acknowledge distinctive performance; and undergraduate awards will normally be classified. The details are given in the relevant assessment regulations.

### **3. Admission, Registration, Progression and Award**

22 The Arts University Bournemouth has established an Admissions Policy, which is reviewed annually by Academic Board. Minimum entry criteria are included as an appendix to this Policy. The Admissions Policy is published on the AUB Intranet.

23 All students shall be registered for the named final award to which their course of study leads. All courses, and therefore students, shall be the responsibility of a named subject area and School. Students undertaking standalone units will be allocated to the home subject area and School of the unit they are taking.

24 The Framework permits both full-time and part-time modes of study. A course can be offered in full-time mode, part-time mode or both. Accelerated study is also permitted for undergraduate courses (see precept 43 below).

25 The following maximum periods of registration apply:

Master of Architecture: 5 years

Master of Fine Arts: 5 years

Master of Arts: 5 years

Integrated Master's: 8 years

Honours Degrees: 8 years

Foundation Degrees: 5 years.

26 The minimum period of registration for all undergraduate courses and awards is one academic year. The minimum period of registration for all postgraduate courses and awards is one half of the total credit required for the intended award.

27 The maximum credit awarded through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) towards the fulfilment of an undergraduate award will not normally be more than two thirds of the total credit required for the award. The maximum credit awarded through RPL towards the fulfilment of a postgraduate taught award will not normally be more than one half of the total credit required for the award.

28 A student may change their mode of study (i.e. full-time or part-time) where this alternative mode has been validated, and is in operation. Any proposal for a change of mode of study must be approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor or nominee.

29 Students may normally only change from between modes of study at the start of a level, although exceptions may be made where this would be in the student's interest. The judgement of the student interest is the sole responsibility of the Deputy Vice Chancellor or nominee.

30 For courses of more than 180 credits, there is a formal progression point at the end of each block of 120 credits. Students who have not achieved the full balance of credit, through either deferral or failure, will normally be required to achieve this outstanding credit before progressing.

31 Students who have completed a level of study and achieved the full balance of credit (including any credits achieved by compensation where this is permitted under the assessment regulations) will progress automatically to the next level of study.

32 Exceptionally, at the sole discretion of the Progression and Awards Board, a student may be permitted to progress conditionally (i.e. with outstanding units which still have to be passed). In such cases, the Board will also set the deadline by which any outstanding work must be submitted. If the work is passed, the progression is

confirmed. If the work does not pass, and no credit is awarded, the progression decision is automatically revoked. The Progression and Awards Board, or a sub-group of the Board including at least the Chair, the Chair of the Subject Examination Board and an independent member appointed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor, confirms the action to be taken (which may be a requirement for academic intermission or, where the failure is irretrievable, the termination of studies).

#### **4. Curriculum structure**

- 33 The Framework provides a structure which enables collaboration and complementarity across the University's curriculum offer, such that courses are enabled to work together on projects and units of mutual relevance and value. The Framework provides sufficient flexibility for course teams to develop linked units with other courses, where this is appropriate.
- 34 Units are designed in multiples of 10 credits. The smallest building block within the framework is a unit of 10 credits. The regulatory framework does not permit half units, or multiples involving half units.
- 35 The Framework acknowledges progressive study in terms not only of breadth but also of depth. Hence, the size of units may be progressively larger at higher levels of the framework, which may correspond to progression through the course.
- 36 The largest unit permitted within the framework is normally 60 credits (which may be one unit at Level 6 only). Exceptionally one 80-credit unit at Level 6 or Level 7 may be approved where this is part of a "closed course" designed specifically to respond to an external demand, as described in the Guidance on course development. In consequence, an 80-credit unit is not available for a typical course. At Level 4 and Level 5, the maximum unit size is 40 credits. There are no restrictions on the number of 40 credit units that may be used at any level; these will be tested on a course-by-course basis at validation and review.
- 37 The Framework recognises the increasing development of independent learning across levels such that the contact time for each student may progressively decrease through the levels of the course.
- 38 There must be an appropriate balance of study, so courses will be structured in such a way to ensure an equitable workload across the taught academic year. Similarly, courses are structured to ensure that student learning is progressive, and early units or levels are used, in part, to prepare students for the demands of the later study requirements.
- 39 Courses may offer Pathway options to allow students to specialise in a specific area of interest, and for these courses, students will take the units assigned to their chosen Pathway. Pathway options represent different routes through the course from a single named admission point, with shared delivery where this is appropriate. Precept 18 above provides detail of the credit and naming arrangements for such awards, which must be approved at validation or periodic review. Where a course offers a Pathway, the list of students who are intending to complete a named award must be presented to Registry and Planning by mid-point of the final year of study.
- 40 Courses may offer a limited amount of choice, either through offering optional units (which are alternate but course-specific units, available at any level), or through offering elective units (which may include units from other disciplines, at Levels 4 and 5 only, to a maximum of 20 credits per level). The range of optional and/or elective units available will be considered and approved at validation or periodic review. In addition, an independent study unit is available, where this is included at validation or periodic review, which enables a student to develop their own programme of activity and agreed learning outcomes. Further guidance on the development of optional and elective units is contained within the *Guidance on course development*, available on



the Intranet and updated as appropriate through Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQ).

- 41 Part-time courses will ideally be aligned to the full-time offer to secure maximum cross-cohort engagement and provide the best possible student learning experience. However, part-time students will not be expected to study more than an average of 20 hours per week.

## **5. Study time**

- 42 For Master of Arts awards, there are three phases of study, each of fifteen weeks. These will normally commence in October, February and June.
- 43 For all other taught courses, including the Master of Architecture, Master of Fine Arts and all undergraduate awards, the year is divided into four terms. Full-time courses will normally be delivered over three terms commencing in the Autumn term, with a 10-10-10 week structure, and a total of 30 weeks<sup>2</sup>. Thus, the taught year will normally equate to one academic level. Courses may be designed for delivery using all four terms, providing accelerated learning, where this meets applicant demand and where delivery can be managed. The formally agreed terms of study shall include the full student learning experience, including assessment, tutorials and academic counselling. Students who have not completed the full balance of credit during the scheduled teaching time may be required to retrieve outstanding units during untaught time.
- 44 For part-time awards, the taught year may not equate to an academic level. Progression between levels will be determined at the end of each level, which will always be at the end of a term.
- 45 Teaching and assessment will fall within the specified taught time, although students who have not completed the full balance of credit during the scheduled teaching time may be required to retrieve outstanding units during untaught time.
- 46 The Framework permits educational visits where they take place during the agreed weeks of study, and are arranged in accordance within the Educational Visits procedure<sup>3</sup>. Arrangements for educational visits, work placement and other activity off campus must permit other units normally taught at that time to be studied appropriately.
- 47 Student Exchange is permitted, in accordance with the University's Student Exchange Policy. The way in which the outcomes of the Exchange will be assessed, and will contribute to the student's overall academic profile, must be agreed through a dedicated Learning Agreement in advance of the Exchange taking place.
- 48 Except where explicitly approved by LTQ, all periods of work placement activity must fall within the agreed weeks of study, and are not additional to it. All such activities must be approved by the Course Leader as providing relevant knowledge or experience to support the student's overall learning on the course. Placement units may be undertaken during the vacation periods where necessary, but the total study time should be no more than the standard agreed number of teaching weeks. Periods of work placement activity must be arranged in accordance with the Work Placement and Release Policy.
- 49 The University may offer a reading week for higher education students but this will not count as one of the agreed weeks of study. Individual courses may include a teaching-free week as part of the agreed weeks of study where this is appropriate.

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<sup>2</sup> This is the traditional undergraduate year

<sup>3</sup> The Educational Visits Procedure, Checklist and Risk Assessment is available via the intranet

50 There will be an even distribution of learning hours across the academic year.

## **6. Curriculum content**

51 All courses will include reference to the historical, theoretical and contextual frameworks of their discipline. Assessment components will take account of knowledge and understanding of these frameworks.

52 Employability skills are a key feature of all courses at the University. Additionally, all degrees have an element of career planning and development within the discipline, and offer students the chance to reflect on their learning and professional development. All degrees will include a course outcome relating to an understanding of the professional context, although this may be assessed in a variety of ways (including indirectly).

53 All undergraduate courses include a major project component during the final level of study, which enables students to complete a significant body of work. This major project must comprise a minimum of 40 credits. All students will normally be expected to produce a piece of academic writing of at least 5,000<sup>4</sup> words as part of their assessed work in the final year of study. In addition, all courses will include a critical evaluation of practical work for the Major Project unit set against Learning Agreements with a 1,000-word limit. For postgraduate awards, it is imperative that students are able to demonstrate the scope and depth of learning required of an award at this level, and hence the final phase of study will typically comprise a 60-credit project unit, with the outcomes demonstrated through the study plan or learning agreement.

54 Neither the major projects nor written submission described in precept 53 above may be replaced by a period of work experience, RPL or any other activity.

55 All courses are designed to provide opportunities for students to reflect on their learning, and the implications for their professional development. These opportunities may be formalised through a dedicated unit, or through aspects of larger units.

56 All Foundation Degree courses will include a period of work placement, as required by the QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement.

## **7. Skills, behaviours and competences**

57 All undergraduate courses must develop in students a comprehensive body of transferable skills.

58 No single profile of transferable skills applies to all undergraduate courses. All courses will be expected to demonstrate the availability of transferable skills through the aims and outcomes of units and this will be tested at course validation.

59 However, there is a body of employability skills that must be delivered to all students. At Level 4 this will include academic conventions and good academic practice (such as the avoidance of plagiarism); information retrieval; and general skills which facilitate academic study within higher education. As students' progress through the course, they will increasingly be expected to demonstrate advanced skills in communication (verbal, visual and written); an ability to apply their knowledge to new situations; critical reflection and self-evaluation; an appreciation of information literacy; team-working; and higher-level problem solving. They will also be expected to show appropriate levels of organisation and time management, and to demonstrate, through their work, the professionalism required of a graduate; and to be able to position their own work within the wider context of the discipline.

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<sup>4</sup> Please note that all word counts should be considered as a norm, but +/- 10% is acceptable.

60 Many of these skills are pre-requisites for completion of a degree, and a student's command of them will be reflected throughout their work. In addition, there are behaviours and competences that are expected of a graduate in art, design, media and performance. Achievement of each of the full range of skills might be through a specific assessment criterion in one unit; or through the totality of the student experience on a unit or level (e.g. organisation and time management skills might be tested through the way in which a student approaches a project); or through other means.

## 8. **Assessment**

61 Assessment components should enable all learning outcomes for a unit to be assessed through summative assessment. The assessment components for each unit are included within the unit descriptor, amplified within the online Unit Information, which will clarify which components are formative, and which are summative.

62 Normally, there will be no more than one assessment component for units of 10 and 20 credits and no more than two assessment components for any unit. Where two summative assessment components are used, a percentage weighting must be given to each. All assessment components should be explicitly defined in a written brief, except where a learning agreement is developed to define individual study within the parameters of a unit. Formative assessment components, which are primarily diagnostic and do not contribute to the overall mark for the unit, must also be listed, and the contribution to the student learning experience must be explicit.

63 Any grouping of assessable activities into one "portfolio" assessment component must specifically identify the required elements and should reflect an appropriate level of complexity and scale commensurate with the credit weighting of the unit. A maximum number of pieces to be submitted should be identified within the unit descriptor, with a minimum also given where this is essential to demonstrate breadth as well as depth of learning. The overall assessment component must be a coherent, integrated submission, and the portfolio must respond to one brief, even where this may have more than one required element.

64 Wherever possible, assessment methods should be flexible to encourage achievement by students with a variety of strengths and learning styles. This may include alternative forms of submission within one unit, each meeting the specified learning outcomes, or may be delivered through the range of methods used across course units.

65 It is permitted, under the regulations, for written work to be replaced by alternative forms of submission, where it can be demonstrated that this also meets the stated learning outcomes and assessment criteria and where the student learning experience, and assessment, is equivalent. The Course Leader is responsible for ensuring equivalence, in consultation with the Chair of the Examination Board.

66 Feedback should be constructive and contribute to the student's learning and development. This is facilitated by ensuring that a timely and consistent assessment process is operated. Comment should reference performance against the learning outcomes, and should substantiate the mark given. For units completed after week 20 of a graduating cohort, feedback will be limited to the justification of the mark. Developmental comment will only be given where the unit has not been passed.

67 Each subject area will have at least one Subject Examination Board per annum to ratify the results of units owned by its undergraduate courses. There will also be at least one Postgraduate Examination Board per annum to ratify the results of units owned by postgraduate courses. The terms of reference and constitution of the Examination Boards are outlined in the assessment regulations. The respective Examination Boards may, at their discretion, arrange for additional meetings during

the year to consider the outcomes for part-time courses at points of progression between levels; or to consider the results of work submitted for reassessment.

- 68 The University's Progression and Awards Board will meet as required to consider the recommendations of Subject and Postgraduate Examination Boards. This will always include a meeting at the end of the full-time undergraduate academic year; and again, at the end of the full-time postgraduate taught year, to consider recommendations for award.

## **9. Recording and reflecting on progress**

- 69 Students are entitled to regular information about their progress through the course. Each student is entitled to a minimum of one academic guidance tutorial in each taught term.
- 70 Personal development planning (PDP) is seen as an essential tool when assisting students to achieve their own potential. It is therefore introduced to all undergraduate students at Level 4 and forms an integral part of unit delivery throughout the course. Students will be encouraged to take responsibility and ownership for their personal development planning; each course will determine the most appropriate mechanisms through which PDP is introduced, encouraged and monitored. PDP is also an integrated part of all postgraduate taught courses.
- 71 A transcript recording individual achievement will be made available by Registry to the student at the end of each level of study. This will be a means by which students can monitor, build on and reflect upon their personal development and career planning. The transcript conforms to the European Diploma Supplement Requirements.

## **10. Managing delivery**

- 72 Courses will be designed to facilitate formal opportunities for complementary work across disciplines and courses.
- 73 Whilst units have a volume defined by the time required to achieve their stated learning outcomes, they have no intrinsic 'shape'. The pattern of study is specified only by points at which teaching is delivered and periods when access to facilities occur within the overall duration of the unit. The use of independent study time, which tends to increase throughout the course, is extremely flexible (when not strictly related to the provision of technical resources).
- 74 To deliver this flexibility, the accurate scheduling of student groups against fixed resources (staffing, accommodation and equipment) is required, through a standardised timetabling system visible across the entire range of named courses. This is further necessary to monitor effectively study patterns and deliver the best possible levels of resource utilisation.
- 75 The Framework provides a central structure for scheduling all academic activities. It allows academic courses to be constructed as a series of intensive study blocks, a group of longer concurrent syllabi or a combination of both.
- 76 For new students enrolling at the start of the course, an induction will be organised. In the case of undergraduate students, this will normally take place before the formal start of the course, and new students joining Levels 5 or 6 will also be offered an induction prior to the start of the autumn term. For postgraduate students, the induction will normally happen at the start of their first taught week.
- 77 Graduating students are requested to remain in attendance until the meeting of the relevant Examination Board so that they are able to meet the external examiner if requested, but this is not required.

78 The academic calendar for each academic year will specify the deadline for all work to have been submitted for assessment, and a further deadline for marks to be notified to Registry. The results of earlier units should be notified on their completion.

A unit may be heavily taught at the outset, followed by an independent study project with a handing-in date in advance of the conclusion of the unit to allow marking or another form of assessment to be conducted (e.g. small group seminars for the purpose of a peer evaluation element). In determining the completion time for a unit, the following guidelines must be observed:

- i. No activity related to the assessment outcome of a unit can be programmed into the remaining period following assessment of that unit.
- ii. Early completion cannot be used to facilitate the early start of another unit.
- iii. The overall study load placed on students does not give rise to unreasonable peaks and troughs through the truncation of delivery times within units.

79 Academic Board, through LTQ, will establish and amend from time to time the academic structures required to underpin the University Regulatory Framework. Details of the Examination Boards required are outlined in the relevant assessment regulations.

80 The University Management Team will establish, and may amend from time to time, the management structures required for the operation of the Framework.

## **11. Quality Assurance and Enhancement**

81 LTQ has overall responsibility for the arrangements for the quality assurance and enhancement of the University's academic provision. The University employs a number of measures to ensure that all courses are regularly reviewed, and their quality assured and enhanced.

82 Processes for quality assurance and enhancement are themselves subject to regular review by the Committee and are detailed in the HE Quality Assurance Handbook, which is published annually and available on the Intranet.

## **Appendix A: Awards available**

The following awards are available at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level (Levels 4-7)

(In each case the italics show where the course title is included; this is given in plain type on all certificates and associated documentation)

Master of Architecture	Master of Architecture	Level 7
Master of Fine Arts	MFA	Level 7
Master of Arts	MA <i>Subject</i>	Level 7
Master of Science	MSc <i>Subject</i>	
Master of Arts with specialism	MA <i>Subject (Specialism)</i>	Level 7
Master of Science with specialism	MSc <i>Subject (Specialism)</i>	
Master of Research	MRes	Level 7
Postgraduate Diploma	PGDip <i>Subject</i>	Level 7
Postgraduate Certificate	PGCert <i>Subject</i>	Level 7
Integrated Master's	MArt <i>Subject</i>	Level 7
Honours Degree	BA (Hons) <i>Subject</i> BSc (Hons) <i>Subject</i>	Level 6
Honours Degree with specialism	BA (Hons) <i>Subject (Specialism)</i> BSc (Hons) <i>Subject (Specialism)</i>	Level 6
Degree (without Honours)	BA <i>Subject</i> BSc <i>Subject</i>	Level 6
Foundation Degree	FdA <i>Subject</i>	Level 5
Diploma of Higher Education	DipHE <i>Subject</i>	Level 5
Certificate of Higher Education	CertHE <i>Subject</i>	Level 4

The following credit requirements apply:

For the award of a Master of Architecture (MArch) and Master of Fine Arts (MFA), a minimum of 240 credits must be gained, of which a minimum of 180 credits must be at Level 7. An MA will be awarded to any student undertaking an award leading to 240 credits, who leaves their course of study having successfully completed 180 credits at Level 7.

For a Master's Degree, a minimum of 180 credits must be gained, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 7.

For a Postgraduate Diploma, a minimum of 120 credits must be gained at Level 7. A PGDip will be awarded to any student who leaves their course of study having successfully completed 120 credits at Level 7. Any credit undertaken at Level 6, as part of an agreed postgraduate taught programme, cannot contribute to the credit required for a PGDip.

For a Postgraduate Certificate, a minimum of 60 credits must be gained at Level 7. A PGCert will be awarded to any student who leaves their course of study having successfully completed 60 credits at Level 7. Any credit undertaken at Level 6, as part of an agreed postgraduate taught programme, cannot contribute to the credit required for a PGCert.

For an Integrated Master's award, a minimum of 480 credits must be gained of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 7; a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 6; and a minimum of 240 credits must be at Level 5 or above.

For an Honours Degree, a minimum of 360 credits must be gained of which a minimum of 240 credits must be at Level 5 or above. Of these credits, a minimum of 120 must be at Level 6.

For students who articulate from a Foundation Degree to an Honours Degree, a minimum of 120 credits at Level 6 must be gained to achieve the Honours Degree.

For a Degree without Honours, a minimum of 300 credits must be achieved, of which a minimum of 60 credits must be at Level 6, and a minimum of 180 credits must be at Level 5 or above.

For a Foundation Degree, a minimum of 240 credits must be gained, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 5.

For a Diploma of Higher Education, a minimum of 240 credits must be gained, of which a minimum of 120 credits must be at Level 5.

For a Certificate of Higher Education, a minimum of 120 credits must be gained.

## Section C: Postgraduate Taught Assessment Regulations

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The regulations which follow apply to all students undertaking a postgraduate taught award of the Arts University Bournemouth. 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 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, but all learning outcomes must be passed to successfully complete the unit.
- 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 has adopted a “notched” marking scheme whereby only certain marks are used within each grade, to support consistency and reliability within the assessment process. The only marks available within any ten-point band are \*2, \*5 and \*8 (e.g. 62, 65, 68). These marks correspond to a low, mid, and high level of achievement within each grade band.
- 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; and within four working weeks of the deadline. Exceptionally extensions in the assessment process may occur, for example if a large number of substantial pieces require verification. Students will be notified in cases where an extension to the marking period may occur. A sample of work must be retained (either originals or copies, whichever is practicable depending on size) and passed to the Course Leader for forwarding to External Examiners.



### **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 50%
  - ii) an overall unit mark of 50% or more gains full credit
  - iii) an overall unit mark of 0-49% 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 (but see para 3.3)
  - v) no compensation is available on postgraduate taught awards.
- 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. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit**

- 4.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the procedure whereby a student has previously acquired learning, outside of the University, whether certificated or not, and is recognised for the purposes of admission and progression. A student seeking recognition under this procedure should contact their Course Leader for further information and advice, and refer to the University RPL 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 RPL. On achieving the remaining assessment component(s), the credit for the unit may then be awarded. The RPL Policy is available at: <https://aub.ac.uk/regulations>

### **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. The assessment deadline is not flexible, and no submission will be accepted after the deadline (which includes the date and the time). Where submission is made using the online portal, the portal will automatically close at the time specified. Students are strongly encouraged to submit in good time, to avoid any last minute concerns.
- 5.2 Failure to submit any assessment work for a unit by the given deadline will be treated as failure of that unit unless mitigation circumstances apply (see section 14). A mark of 0% will automatically be entered on the student record. Where a unit has two

assessment components a mark of 0% will only be given where the student has failed to submit work for both components.

- 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. Verification of Work**

- 6.1 As part of good academic practice, student work at the University will be routinely subjected to moderation of grades by a second academic marker or team marking. This is known as “verification”. (For further information see Appendix B, Page 29).
- 6.2 On postgraduate taught courses, a minimum of 50% of student work will be verified, including all work initially adjudged to be at a grade of Fail.
- 6.3 All final project work will be subject to team or second 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 (i.e. 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 two 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 50% 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, and will apply to all students. A student will never be given a deadline to submit the work which permits less than four weeks for the work to be retrieved.

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 in a unit on both previous occasions (see 5.2 above), this is categorised as a double non-submission. A student is permitted a double non-submission in unit(s) weighted up to a total of 20 credits per year and may be eligible for a Retake in this/these unit(s). Where a double non-submission has taken place in a unit, or combination of units, equivalent to 30 or more credits, the units are deemed to have been failed irretrievably and the students' 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 50% 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, course or general regulations covering student conduct. The non-payment of fees or other University 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'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.

An MA will also be awarded to any student undertaking an award leading to 240 credits, who leaves their course of study having successfully completed 180 credits at Level 7.

### **9.1.4 Master of Architecture (MArch) and Master of Fine Arts (MFA)**

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 Merit or Distinction, or Master of Architecture/Master of Fine Arts with Merit or Distinction may be awarded. Only units at Level 7 contribute towards the determination of a Merit or Distinction and in undertaking the calculations units are weighted according to their size. The average mark at Level 7 is calculated to two decimal places. A final mark will be rounded up if it is within 0.5% (inclusive) of

the higher classification band. There are two criteria for each classification, both of which must be satisfied; these are:

### **Distinction**

- 10.1.1 An overall average mark of 65% or above; this is calculated on the basis of all Level 7 unit marks undertaken as part of the award with units weighted according to their size.
- 10.1.2 A mark of 70% or above in a majority of credits undertaken at Level 7, with units weighted according to their size.

### **Merit**

- 10.1.3 An overall average mark of 55% or above; this is calculated on the basis of all Level 7 unit marks undertaken as part of the award with units weighted according to their size.
- 10.1.4 A mark of 60% or above in a majority of credits undertaken at Level 7, with units weighted according to their size.
- 10.2 Any student who achieves the requirements for the award, but does not meet these criteria, are awarded a Pass.

## **11. Withdrawal**

- 11.1 A student wishing to change their course of study must consult both their current Dean and the Dean 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 Dean and a copy sent to Registry.
- 11.3 If a student withdraws from their studies at the University 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 Course Leader and be supported by the Dean. All such requests must be made in writing to the Course Leader at the earliest point possible. The Dean will not normally support an application for intermission within two weeks of an assessment submission date. In such cases, a student may be required to make a submission before an intermission is approved. Failure to inform the Dean 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 Dean 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, they 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 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 Dean.
- 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 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, course or general regulations covering student conduct. The non-payment of fees or other University 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 AUB, which impact on their performance either directly (such as an illness or injury), or indirectly (by requiring their 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 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. For specific guidance on student pregnancy and maternity, please refer to: <https://aub.ac.uk/regulations>
- 14.3 The University 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: <https://aub.ac.uk/regulations>

#### **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 Vice Chancellor.
- 15.3 Students should note that the University 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 expects the highest standards of academic integrity from its students. Any form of academic misconduct, including plagiarism, constitutes a breach of the University'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's Academic Dishonesty (Cheating) Policy. This is available at: <https://aub.ac.uk/regulations>

## **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's obligation to ensure consistency of standards not simply within a course but also across all similar courses at the University, membership of each Postgraduate Examination Board is supplemented by an independent member appointed by the Chair of LTQ. This independent member will normally be the University Secretary or their nominee. The role of the independent member is to ensure that the University regulations are applied consistently across all courses. This process also allows the University 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 and Vice-Chancellor, 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'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: <https://aub.ac.uk/regulations>

## **18. Publication of Results**

- 18.1 Following confirmation by the Progression and Awards Board, results are forwarded to the Principal and Vice-Chancellor as Chair of Academic Board for approval, after which time the results are published. The Principal and Vice-Chancellor may, at their direction, devolve this authority to the Deputy Vice Chancellor. 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 online; 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

- 20.1 Students must ensure that all debts (including rent, course dues, library fines, etc) owed to the University are paid, and that all University 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. The Certificate of graduates will be withheld until any outstanding debt is paid to the University. Where a student has an outstanding debt to the University, 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. For further information, refer to the Fees and Charges Payment Policy available on: <https://aub.ac.uk/regulations>

## 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:
- your performance in assessment may have been affected by mitigating circumstances that, for good reason, you were unable or unwilling to bring to the University's attention before your work was assessed. An appeal of this type **must** be supported by appropriate evidence;
  - there has been a procedural irregularity such as an administrative error or that the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the course regulations.
- 21.3 The University 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: <https://aub.ac.uk/regulations>

## **Appendix A: Qualification Descriptors**

### **Level 7**

At Level 7, students are expected to demonstrate considerable originality and autonomy in approaching complex problems. They will often be working with issues which are at the forefront of the discipline, either through direct engagement or through the application of such concepts to their own work.

This level requires that students demonstrate a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship. In consequence, students working at the boundaries of the discipline may be expected to create new knowledge, as well as interpreting developments, and to challenge existing hypotheses as appropriate. Units will provide students with the opportunity to develop their critical and conceptual understanding, and to apply this progressively through the course. Students will be expected to evaluate both current research, and relevant methodologies, and to demonstrate originality in their approach.

Level 7 is equivalent to the Masters award, and those who complete a full qualification at this level will typically be able to “deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences”, and “demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level”. Successful students will have continued to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills, and will have advanced transferable skills which demonstrate the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility; decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Master's Degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

1. a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice;
2. a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
3. originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
4. conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline;
  - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

## **Appendix B: Verification of marks for undergraduate and postgraduate taught awards**

1. Verification is the process through which the University assures itself that the marks awarded are fair, and represent an accurate assessment of student performance against the unit Learning Outcomes. It provides confidence that assessment is consistent and reliable.
2. It is a fundamental principle of the University's assessment process that assessment must be complete, and a final mark agreed, before any marks or feedback is shared with the student. The Unit Leader is responsible for confirming the mark on any unit. The purpose of verification is to ensure that these marks are accurate prior to be published.
3. Verification may be undertaken in three specific ways:

### *Team marking*

- 3.1 Team marking is most commonly used to confirm the marks for large project units, generally at Levels 6 or 7. A team of three or more assessors, led by the Unit Leader, reviews the work and comes together to agree the final mark. The team will discuss the merits of each assignment, and agree a mark and the key points for summative feedback, which will be overseen by the Unit Leader. As more than two assessors have confirmed their satisfaction with the marks awarded, no further verification is required.

### *Second marking*

- 3.2 Second marking occurs when a second assessor reviews all the work submitted for a unit, and reaches their own judgement on the mark which should be awarded. This is then compared against the view of the lead assessor. Where there is a disparity between the marks, the two assessors should meet and agree the final mark. (Exceptionally, where they are unable to agree a final mark, a third assessor may be used, at the discretion and appointment of the Course Leader). The role of the second assessor is to confirm the marks, or to raise concerns about either standards or consistency.

### *Sampling*

- 3.3 Sampling is similar to second marking, except that the second assessor only reviews a sample of the work, to assure themselves that marking is fair and consistent. The details of the sample should be agreed between the two assessors, subject to the parameters in paragraph 4 below. If there is any concern about the standards being applied, or the consistency of approach, this is likely to result in a review of the work for the whole cohort. Sampling is also common where there is a large number of students, and initial assessment may be shared across a group of two or more assessors. The Unit Leader will then sample the assessments of each individual assessor to ensure that judgements are consistent across the cohort.

## 4. Parameters

- 4.1 The following parameters apply:
  - i) For units of 60 credits, at Levels 6 or 7, either team or second marking must be used.
  - ii) For units of 30 and 40 credits at Levels 5, 6 and 7, a minimum of 50% of the work in the unit must be reviewed, either through second marking or sampling.
  - iii) All work initially graded as Fail, and all work awarded a mark of 75% or above, must be reviewed, either through second marking or sampling.
  - iv) Overall, the following minimum levels of review apply:
  - v) At Level 7, a minimum of 50% of work across the year
  - vi) At Level 6, a minimum of 40% of work across the year; all units must be subject to some form of review in each academic year

- vii) At Level 5, a minimum of 25% of work across the year; each unit must be subject to review at least every two years
- viii) At Level 4, as marks do not contribute to the overall classification, there is no requirement for marks to be reviewed. However, it will commonly be used on new courses; where the lead assessor is a new member of staff; or where it is requested by the Course Leader, for example in response to concerns which have been identified.

## 5. Practical matters

- 5.1 Course teams will need to judge how, with limited staff availability, they can conduct verification. This includes securing access to the work, for instance in the case of presentations or screenings. Some forward planning is often required to ensure that the process can be conducted efficiently; this may include the need for a second marker to sit in on a sample of presentations, for example, or for work to remain in place within a studio.
  - 5.2 Where possible and appropriate, the second marker can be from another degree team.
  - 5.3 Course Leaders will oversee and review the verification process and are responsible to the Dean for its efficient operation.
6. For completeness, it should be noted that the external examiner does not have a role in the assessment of work. The role of the external examiner is to review the marks awarded, and reach their own judgement about the appropriateness and consistency of internal assessment. Nevertheless, it is common to include in the external examiner's sample any work which has proved particularly challenging to assess (without bringing this fact to the external examiner's attention).

