

IV. Foundation Degree Progress Regulations

These regulations apply to all foundation degree students registered in academic year 2014/15 (or in the case of C. General Entrance Requirements, are applying during academic year 2014/15).

These regulations shall be understood in conjunction with requirements laid down in the General Regulations and the Examination Conventions of the University, and shall be read together with any examination conventions specific to the relevant degree programme, as approved by the relevant faculty learning, teaching and student experience committee.

A. The Qualifications and Credit Framework

1. Foundation degree programmes are aligned with the *Newcastle University Qualifications and Credit Framework* which is available as part of the Quality and Standards Handbook at www.ncl.ac.uk/quilt/atoz/policies.htm. This Framework sets out the minimum standards for degree programmes; degree programme regulations may exceed these minima. Degree programme structures should be developed in accordance with *The Qualifications and Credit Framework*.

2. The *Newcastle University Qualifications and Credit Framework* complies with a national set of reference points for qualifications in Higher Education and, within the European Union, aims for international comparability of awards.

3. The Framework stipulates that foundation degrees consist of 240 credits with a minimum of 90 level 4 (or higher) credits and a minimum of a further 90 level 5 (or higher) credits. No more than 30 level 4 credits can be taken beyond Stage 1. Up to 30 level 3 credits can be taken at Stage 1 but not beyond. The level of study generally equates to the stages (years) of a foundation degree.

B. Definitions

4. Where the following terms appear in these regulations, in degree programme regulations or in the University *Foundation Degree Examination Conventions*, they shall have the meanings assigned below:

- a) **Assessment:** A generic term for a set of processes that measure the students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes in terms of knowledge acquired, understanding developed, skills gained and attributes demonstrated. These assessments may include, for example, written, aural and oral examinations, essays, poster or professional skills assessment, other course work, dissertations and practical activity;

- b) **Compulsory module:** a module which a student, registered for a degree programme, is required to study;
- c) **Core module:** a module which students must pass, and in which a fail mark may neither be carried (Convention H32) nor compensated (Convention J33) such modules are designated by the board of studies as essential for progression to a further stage of the programme or for study in a further module;
- d) **Credit:** A quantitative measure of learning effort. The size of a module, measured by reference to student learning time so that for every 10 credits a student is expected to spend 100 hours in a combination of programmed activities, private study and assessment. Credit is normally awarded for the achievement of a set of specified intended learning outcomes;
- e) **Credit level descriptors:** A description of the defined levels at which a module is taught. These levels are: a) Level 3; b) Level 4; c) Level 5; d) Level 6 and e) Level 7. Full descriptors can be seen as part of *The Qualifications and Credit Framework* in the Quality and Standards Handbook;
- f) **Degree classification:** a means of distinguishing between the differences in achievement by individual students of the intended learning outcomes for a degree programme. Only modules studied in Stage 2 contribute towards the degree classification. All modules that contribute to the degree classification are referred to as DC (Degree Classification) modules;
- g) **Degree programme director:** a member of the University who is responsible for the day-to-day management of a degree programme;
- h) **Degree programme regulations:** the regulations approved by the University for the programme of study for which a student is registered;
- i) **Foundation degree programme: a 2-year programme** of study consisting of 240 credits and comprising a number of stages. Each stage consists of 120 credits with the level of modules taken as prescribed in individual degree programme regulations. For a foundation degree, the University's *Qualifications and Credit Framework* requires a minimum of 90 level 4 (or higher) credits and a minimum of a further 90 level 5 (or higher) credits. No more than 30 level 4 credits can be taken beyond Stage 1. Up to 30 level 3 credits can be taken at Stage 1 but not beyond;
- j) **Higher Education Certificate:** the qualification awarded to a candidate on an Honours degree programme who has satisfied the examiners in at least 120 credits worth of study (of which at least 90 are at level 4 or above) and who does not complete the degree programme;
- k) **Module:** A discrete component of a programme of study having stated intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning opportunities designed to achieve those outcomes, and assessment tasks designed

to enable students to demonstrate achievement of the outcomes. Modules are allocated credit values and have a defined level;

- l) **Part-time student:** a student studying a maximum of 60 credits of a degree programme in one academic year;
- m) **Pre-requisite module:** A module that is required to be studied (but not necessarily passed) before undertaking a further module that assumes prior knowledge;
- n) **Stage:** A sub-division of a programme, normally corresponding to one academic year (for full time students) and 120 credits.
- o) **University Common Scale:** The scale for the return of marks as set out in *Foundation Degree Examination Conventions*. The scale defines the range of marks to be given to represent degree classifications, and is designed to ensure consistency and fairness to students across all modules;

C. General Entrance Requirements

5. All applications for admission to foundation degree programmes shall be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

6. The normal minimum entry requirement for foundation degree programmes validated by the University is the achievement of a level 3 qualification, or its equivalent.

7. Before being admitted to a foundation degree programme, candidates shall:

- a) satisfy the programme of study entrance requirements for that degree and
- b) satisfy, in the case of applicants whose first language is not English, the required minimum level of English language ability for the programme of study, in accordance with the University's English Language Policy and
- c) register in accordance with such instructions as the University shall prescribe from time to time.

8. Where a candidate does not satisfy the requirements in (6) or (7a) above, a selector may nevertheless make a conditional or unconditional offer to that candidate, subject to being satisfied that the candidate is, or will be on achievement of any conditions stipulated in the offer, likely to succeed on the programme of study.

Information and advice on the equivalence of international and United Kingdom qualifications can be obtained from the Admissions Team in the Marketing and Student Recruitment Directorate.

D. Preconditions for a Foundation Degree Award

9. Before being eligible for a foundation degree award from the University, a student must:
- a) satisfy the entrance requirements relevant to the degree programme;
 - b) register for, and satisfactorily complete, each stage and its constituent modules;
 - c) satisfy the examiners as required under the *Examination Conventions* and the degree programme regulations.

E. Patterns of Study

Foundation Degree Programmes

10. The standard pattern of study and the number of stages for a foundation degree programme shall be as prescribed in *The Qualifications and Credit Framework* and the relevant programme regulations.

Module Specifications

11. Modules shall have a credit value of at least five and no more than 40 credits, and shall have a total credit value that is a multiple of five. Any departure from these norms shall be subject to approval by the relevant faculty learning, teaching and student experience committee.

12. Any module taught in both semesters of the undergraduate academic year shall have a credit value of no fewer than five credits in each semester.

13. Modules shall commence at the beginning of the teaching period of a semester, and conclude at the end of the teaching period of a semester; unless approved otherwise by the relevant faculty learning, teaching and student experience committee.

Approval of Non-standard Patterns of Study

14. A degree programme director may permit a full time foundation degree student to select modules having a total credit value of not less than 50 and not more than 70 in any one semester, provided that such a student registers for modules having a total credit value of 120 in any one stage, excluding any Extra Credit modules (see *General Regulation C.15*). However, a degree programme director may also approve exceptional variations to this standard, taking into account the workload implications and on the understanding that the student is fully aware of the consequences.

15. No student may be permitted to register in Semester 2 for a module that is a substitution for a module studied in Semester 1.

16. At the discretion of the degree programme director, a student may be permitted to transfer from full-time to part-time study (or vice versa). This is subject to specific arrangements being agreed by the degree programme director to accommodate the pattern of part-time study, and to the student

having appropriate immigration status. For international students, advice should be sought from the Visa Team <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/visa/>. Part-time students will be required to pass each stage of the part-time programme.

17. By *General Regulation C13*, students may select modules other than those prescribed in their degree programme regulations, subject to permission from the degree programme director. However, such permission shall not override the provisions of *General Regulations C10, C11 and C12* (registration of module choice) or paragraphs E14, E15 and E16 of these regulations. Any such permission given under this provision shall be reported by the degree programme director to the relevant board of studies and to the relevant faculty learning, teaching and student experience committee.

F. Degree Programme Regulations

Transfer between Degree Programmes

Note: All transfer arrangements are subject to the student having the appropriate immigration status. Further advice should be sought from the Visa Team in any case involving an international student <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/visa/>.

18. Degree programme directors may permit a student to transfer from one stage of a degree programme to the same stage of another degree programme at any time, provided that there is significant overlap (60 credits or more) in the modules previously studied by the student.

19. Degree programme directors may permit a student who has satisfied the examiners in all the assessments in a stage of a degree programme to transfer to the same or the subsequent stage of another degree programme at the start of the next academic year. Such permission may be conditional upon a student following specified variations to the degree programme in order, for example, to ensure that:

- a) compulsory modules not previously studied are taken; *and*
- b) there is no avoidable repetition of modules studied.

20. The degree programme director may permit a student who has not satisfied the examiners in all the assessments in a stage of a degree programme to transfer to the same stage of another degree programme at the start of the next academic year. The degree programme director shall, in exercising this power, consult relevant heads of school and may, on the recommendation of relevant degree programme directors, make permission to transfer conditional upon a student following specified variations to the degree programme. The degree programme director should note that evidence of appropriate academic qualifications is required by the Home Office, and where a transfer is considered for a Tier 4 visa holder, the student should be aware that a further Tier 4 application may be required as part of the process. Students should be referred to the Visa Team for guidance.

21. A degree programme director may grant permission to a student transferring under Regulation 20 to repeat modules in which they have failed to satisfy the examiners. The following conditions apply;

- a) If the total number of credits so repeated is no more than 20, then the student shall be deemed not to have been previously assessed in these modules.
- b) If the total number of credits so repeated is more than 20, then all previous attempts at these modules will be carried forward.

G. General Provisions Governing Attendance and Progress

Satisfactory Progress

22. The student is required to make satisfactory progress in the relevant programme of study and, during each semester, the student's progress shall be reviewed in all modules by the degree programme director.

23. Failure to make satisfactory progress may be grounds for:

- a) further monitoring the progress of the student or requiring the submission of written work in addition to that required by the degree programme regulations;
- b) delay of the student's attempt at the whole assessment for the module(s) concerned to the August/September resit examinations in the same academic year. Where such a delay is imposed, the student's attempt shall be the second attempt;
- c) interruption or termination of the student's programme of study.

Evidence of Failure to make Satisfactory Progress

24. Any of the following may constitute failure to make satisfactory progress and all may be taken into account in considering the student's case:

- a) failure to attend for interview with the tutor, or other academic staff, as required.
- b) failure to meet with a tutor or other required contact point as part of attendance monitoring procedures.
- c) failure to attend regularly the programme of study without good cause (see General Regulations A4);
- d) failure to perform adequately in work prescribed for the degree programme;
- e) failure to submit written work required under the degree programme regulations (whether or not such work counts for assessment purposes) at the required time;
- f) failure to attend examinations or to satisfy the examiners in the examinations prescribed; provisional examination results may be used as such evidence;

- g) failure to attend English language assessment and attend in-session English language classes as directed by the degree programme director.
- h) failure to attend briefings relating to health and safety, especially as they apply to laboratory work, and to pass any assessments in relation to these briefings that are designed to ensure that students are safe to operate in the environment to which such briefings apply.

Procedure for Dealing with Unsatisfactory Progress

25. A student whose progress is considered unsatisfactory by the degree programme director shall be notified in writing of the reasons for this opinion, invited to make a written response and given the opportunity of an interview with the director or nominee. Following this notice and any interview, and taking account of all known circumstances, the degree programme director may:

- a) take further action under regulation G23 (a) or (b);
- b) take further action under regulation G23 (c) in consultation with Student Progress Service;

Appeals against Penalties for Unsatisfactory Progress

26. A student appealing against action taken under regulation G23 may do so by submitting an Academic Appeal within 21 calendar days of the written notification of the action. The Academic Appeal procedure applies; <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/appeals.htm>

Nb. Notwithstanding any ongoing discussion and correspondence with a student about unsatisfactory progress, the University may be obliged to report to the Home Office any International student who has failed to attend lectures, classes or seminars. The report to the Home Office may necessitate termination of the student's studies at the University under General Regulation U.

H Module and Aggregated Assessment

27. There is one final mark for each module but, where module outlines so specify, a student may be required to meet a prescribed threshold in specific components of a module in order to be deemed to have passed the module overall. The module outline must indicate components for which such thresholds apply and must make clear the consequence of failing to meet the threshold: either failure in the module with a fail mark returned, or a deferred pass in which the component failure may be redeemed as part of the same attempt. In addition, module outlines may specify 'zero weighted pass/fail assessments', i.e., assessments that do not contribute to the module mark but that must be passed in order to pass the module.

28. The modes of assessment permitted for each degree programme shall be those specified in the degree programme regulations. The mode(s) of assessment for each module shall be specified in the relevant degree programme handbook. Where the assessment does not take the form of written examinations, rules to be observed by students (for example, in relation to the size, form and submission arrangements for examinable coursework or dissertations, and including rules governing the arrangements for the retention and recall of assessed work) shall be those specified in the degree programme handbook.

29. Modules may:

- a) be assessed separately; *and/or*
- b) two or more modules may be aggregated for assessment purposes; *and/or*
- c) a form of non-modular aggregated assessment may be used in combination with the separate assessment of each module *and/or* the aggregated assessment of groups of modules.

30. Where assessment is aggregated, modules having a total credit value of up to 40 credits may be combined for the purposes of aggregated assessment, unless the relevant faculty learning, teaching and student experience committee approves a higher total credit value for aggregation. In all cases where some form of aggregated assessment is used, the relevant degree programme examination conventions shall determine how the aggregated assessment will be used in accordance with the University Regulations, degree programme regulations and University Examination Conventions governing student progress and degree classification.

J. Provisions for Interruption of Progress

Exclusion for Delayed Progress

31.

- a) Any student, whether full-time or part-time, who is two years overdue in passing any stage *or*
- b) Any full-time student who is three years in arrears with progress in the degree programme

shall be automatically excluded from further study unless given special permission by the degree programme director. In granting special permission to continue, the degree programme director must consider any quality and accreditation issues relevant to the degree programme in question.

Permission for Interruption of Normal Progress

32. Subject to regulation J31 above, the degree programme director may give permission for a student to interrupt normal progress within the degree programme.

Resumption of Progress

33. Where a student:

- a) initially fails all or part of the assessment relating to a stage of a degree programme but later satisfies the examiners, *or*
- b) interrupts normal progress within a degree programme

the student shall be entitled to proceed with the programme of study only under the regulations then applicable to the next and remaining stages of the programme.

Permission to Repeat Tuition

34. A student may only be permitted to repeat a period of tuition with the express approval of the PEC Committee. The PEC Committee may also consider the setting aside of previous assessment attempts (Examination Convention B14)

35. Any student repeating a period of tuition, either at first attempt or resit, will be required to pay tuition fees for the additional period of registration.

Assessment Requirements for Students Returning after an Interruption of Study

36. Where a student is permitted by the degree programme director to interrupt the programme of study at any time during a stage and is required to resume those studies at the same point during a subsequent academic year, any assessments completed prior to the date of interruption shall be carried forward to the end of that stage.

K. Inconsistency between the University Regulations and the Degree Programme Regulations

37. In the event of any inconsistency between the University Regulations and the degree programme regulations, the University Regulations shall prevail, unless an express departure from the University Regulations has been approved by the University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee or the Regulations Sub-Committee acting on its behalf, and a statement that the degree programme regulations are to have priority has been incorporated within them.

