

VI. Integrated Masters Examination Conventions

These conventions apply to all students registered on Integrated Masters programmes in academic year 2015/16.

A. Introduction

Conventions 1-27 of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions shall apply to Integrated Masters Programmes

Additional Notes:

Definition of Integrated Masters

Integrated Masters programmes have a total credit value of 480 credits and a minimum of 120 credits at level 7.

Resits for Undergraduate and Integrated Masters students:

In September 2013, new regulations surrounding resit opportunities were introduced. The changes are being phased in, to limit the effects on students who completed stage 1 prior to 2013/14.

Implementation 2015/16 phase:

- *All students commencing, or repeating, Stage 0 or Stage 1 of an Undergraduate or Integrated Masters programme from September 2013 onwards, those commencing, or repeating, Stage 2 of an Undergraduate or Integrated Masters programme from September 2014 onwards, and those registering for an intercalating year between Stages 2 and 3 in September 2014, and those commencing, or repeating, Stage 3 in September 2015 will have at most two attempts at their current and subsequent stages of their programme.*
- *Students commencing, or repeating, later Stages of an Undergraduate or Integrated Masters Programme in September 2015, will not be affected by any changes to the resit regulations in 2015/16. Earlier versions of the examination conventions surrounding resits and the right to carry failed modules shall apply to these students (2012/13 Undergraduate Examination Conventions L and M)*

A list of Integrated Masters programmes provided by the University is available as part of the Qualifications and Credit Framework, available at www.ncl.ac.uk/quilt/atoz/policies.

Pass mark

The pass mark for level 7 modules and for the award of an Integrated Master's degree is 50. For the sake of clarification, this represents a higher standard of work than the undergraduate (levels 4-6) pass mark of 40. This rule applies to level 7 modules taken at Stage 3, where there may be a mixture of level 6 and level 7 modules.

F. Return of Marks

28. The mark for each module on an Integrated Masters degree programme shall be returned to the board of examiners, and disclosed to students, using the established University Common Scales below, depending on the level of the module.

	Summary description applicable to <i>level 7</i> Degree Classification (DC) Modules	Summary description applicable to Degree Classification (DC) Modules <i>below level 7</i>	Summary description applicable to modules <i>not used for degree classification</i>
0-39	Fail	Fail	Failing
40-49	Fail	Third Class	Basic
50-59	Second Class, Second Division	Second Class, Second Division	Good
60-69	Second Class, First Division	Second Class, First Division	Very Good
70-100	First Class	First Class	Excellent

29. The final mark returned to the board of examiners for a module shall be rounded to the nearest whole number on the University Common Scale.

The rounding of marks shall follow the convention: decimal marks with a decimal component of 0.5 or larger shall be rounded up to the next whole number; marks with a decimal component of less than 0.5 shall be rounded down to the next whole number.

G. Releasing and Adjusting Marks

Conventions 30-32 of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions shall also apply to Integrated Masters awards.

H. Progression from One Stage to Another

33. Subject to meeting the internal progression thresholds described below, a student is permitted to proceed from one stage to the next of an Integrated Masters programme if the student passes, or is deemed to have passed, all the modules in the current stage, or the stage is passed by discretion, exercised under Conventions 40-42, notwithstanding failures in specific modules. In this last case, the individual modules are not deemed to have been passed, and any subsequent calculations must use the best actual mark for each. A student may only be permitted to carry fails from Stages 1 or 2 when so permitted by the PEC Committee. If Stage 2 is passed by discretion,

the board must consider the academic consequences, as Convention 50 will still apply.

To progress on an Integrated Masters programme, a student must meet the internal progression thresholds at the end of Stages 2 and 3. Students not meeting the threshold at the end of Stage 2 will be transferred onto the appropriate Bachelor's degree programme (UG Progress Reg F18). Students not meeting the threshold at the end of Stage 3 will not be permitted to progress to Stage 4 and will be considered for the appropriate Stage 3 exit award applying the principles of the examination conventions for students on a 3 year degree. Note that the Board of Examiners is required to consider all students whose final stage average (after rounding of marks) is within two marks of the progression threshold, applying the principles of Discretion as outlined in Examination Convention 56.

The thresholds for all Integrated Masters Programmes shall be stated in the degree programme regulations for each award, but must as a minimum be:

Stage 2 to 3 – stage average of 50

Stage 3 to 4 – stage average of 50

The averages are those obtained after taking account of passes by compensation, passes by discretion and passes at resit. That is, for each module so passed, a module mark of 40 (level 4-6 modules) or 50 (level 7 modules) is used for calculations.

Degree programme regulations may stipulate thresholds that are more demanding and/or more specific than the minimum stage averages listed above.

In accordance with Conventions 65, 67 and 69, a student not permitted to proceed may be considered for the award of a Bachelor's Degree, a Higher Education Certificate or Higher Education Diploma, applying the principles of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions.

J. Principles of Compensation

34. At Stages 1, 2 and 3 of degree programmes a student shall, on assessment and any reassessment, be deemed to have passed all modules at the stage, notwithstanding that marks of less than 40 have been obtained in one or more modules of levels 4-6 or marks of less than 50 in one or more level 7 modules for that stage, provided that each of the following conditions for compensation are met:

- a) the average mark over all modules at that stage, taking due account of the credit value, is not less than 40;
- b) no single mark for any module of levels 4-6 assessed is below 35;
- c) no single mark for any level 7 module assessed is below 40;

- d) module marks less than 40 (levels 4-6) or 50 (level 7) are compensated at that stage, provided the total credit value of these modules does not exceed 40 (out of the 120 credits studied);
- e) no such compensation is permitted for core modules (UG Progress Regulations B 4(c)).

A student who passes all modules, including modules passed by compensation, and who meets the threshold requirements in H33 will thereby pass the stage and will be eligible to progress to the next stage of the programme.

35. All calculations used to determine a student's right to pass modules by compensation (under Convention 34) must use the best module marks that relate to a given stage, regardless of whether the assessments are first or later attempts.

36. The credit value of all modules must be taken into account when calculating the overall stage average, or applying compensation. If Stage 3 contains a mixture of level 6 and level 7 modules, the overall stage average shall be the weighted average of the marks. There should be no difference in weightings because of the level of the module in the University's Qualifications and Credit Framework.

37. In any case where any form of non-modular aggregated assessment is used at Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the degree programme, the relevant degree programme regulations shall specify whether compensation may be applied to the non-modular aggregated assessment and, if so, the relevant degree programme examination conventions shall set out how such compensation may be applied.

38. The principles of compensation (Conventions 34-37) shall also apply to any consideration for the award of a Bachelor's degree, a Higher Education Certificate or Higher Education Diploma.

39. Where the rules for compensation do not apply, the board of examiners may still exercise discretion under Conventions 19, 40-42, 56-58.

K. Principles of Discretion

Conventions 40-42 of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions apply to Integrated Masters Programmes.

L. Reassessment

Note: The rules in this section should be read in conjunction with Convention 33 above which defines the thresholds for progress from Stage 2 to Stage 3 and from Stage 3 to Stage 4.

43. A student who passes a module (including by compensation or discretion), at any stage of the degree programme, cannot be reassessed for any component of that module.

44. A student at the final stage of an Integrated Master's degree programme shall, under the conditions laid down in Conventions 49 and 60, have the right to one reassessment of some/ all failed modules.

45. A student at any other stage of an Integrated Master's degree programme has the right to a maximum of one reassessment of any failed modules (Convention 48).

46. The form of the reassessment at any stage may vary from the original, at the discretion of the board of studies. Note that the board of studies may delegate this authority to the board of examiners, but that the students who are to be reassessed must be informed of the style of reassessment to be adopted.

47. Exceptionally, a student may be permitted to resit a module that has been passed at University standard, but not to external accreditation requirements. Such resits are for accreditation purposes only and stand outside of the University Examination Conventions. Final module marks and award calculations are not affected. Programme-specific arrangements for accreditation resits are included in the degree programme regulations <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>.

Timing of reassessment at any stage other than the final stage

48. *Second Attempt*

- a) A student who has the right to a second attempt will automatically be entered for failed modules at the next available occasion of assessment (normally in August/September of the same academic year as the first attempt);
- b) A student required, under degree programme regulations, to spend a period outside the United Kingdom, or take up a placement within the United Kingdom, during the reassessment period in August/September may, subject to the approval of the degree programme director, elect to be reassessed in the following August/September.

Timing of Reassessment at the final stage of an Integrated Masters degree programme

49. *Second Attempt*

When a student elects to be reassessed in some or all failed assessments in the final stage of a degree programme (as determined under Convention 59), the reassessment will normally be at the next normal occasion or at an alternative occasion designated by the board of examiners.

M. The Award and Classification of Degrees

50. A student is recommended, as of right, for the award of an appropriate Integrated Masters degree (according to Convention 54) if all the requirements for the award are met, and

- a) all the modules beyond Stage 1 in the degree programme are passed,

or

- b) no more than a maximum of 20 credits beyond Stage 1 are failed

and:

- c) the appropriately weighted average (according to the Degree Programme Regulations) at the end of Stage 4 is no less than 50.

51. Marks from all modules studied at Stages 2, 3 and 4 are used to determine degree classification and so the marks for these modules must be returned using the University Common Scale (DC Scale); note that appropriate modules taken during an intercalating year, in accordance with the degree programme regulations may be excluded from the calculation.

52. Any non-modular aggregated assessment at Stages 2, 3 and 4, may contribute to degree classification as specified in the relevant degree programme regulations.

53. The degree programme regulations shall specify the weight to be given to each stage beyond Stage 1. An average shall be calculated to one decimal place for each stage. These averages shall be combined, according to the prescribed weightings, to one decimal place and then rounded to the nearest whole number according to Convention 29. For a 4-year programme (unless Stage 3 is regarded as an intercalating year – see Convention 51) the weighting Stage 2: Stage 3: Stage 4 shall be one of 1:2:2; 1:3:3; or 1:2:3 unless ULTSEC has approved an exemption.

54. Students shall be entitled, as of right, to the class of degree yielded by the weighted average mark for all modules which contribute to degree classification (subject to Convention 50). The mark for a failed module that is used for the purposes of classification (but subject to Examination Conventions 49 and 62 (ii)) shall be the best mark obtained by the student **on that module**.

55. A final module mark is calculated by using the most recent component marks. In some cases, this may be a combination of second and first attempt component marks, depending on the normal resit arrangements for the module. It is not the case, however, that the best component marks automatically carry forward to the final module mark.

Use of Discretion

The Board of Examiners under Conventions 19, 40-42 has a general power to exercise discretion to treat any student more generously than the numerical and other conventions require.

56. Discretion may be applied to progression (Conventions 40-42) or to classification decisions. The board of examiners must consider whether or not to exercise discretion (including the possibility of awarding a higher classification of degree, if relevant) when:

- a) There is a positive assessment of the impact of medical or other mitigating circumstances by the Personal Extenuating Circumstances Committee (Conventions 14 and 15).

In addition, for final year students, the board of examiners must consider whether or not to exercise discretion to award a higher classification of degree when:

- b) Students have weighted averages of 68 or 69, 58 or 59, 48 or 49, (after rounding of marks). The board of examiners shall have regard to the following:
- i. The overall profile of individual marks achieved in modules;
 - ii. Exceptional performance by the student in any particular module, including, for example, research-based modules or in an oral examination where this is part of the degree programme regulations;
 - iii. Progressive improvement in performance by the student during the final 2 (or 3) stages of study, only where the stage weighting is 1:1.

The board may also use discretion to recommend the award of an Honours degree of any class to a student who has not been recommended for the award of an Honours degree under Convention 54.

57. The University does not permit the use of a viva voce either as a means of monitoring standards or for determining whether a higher classification should be recommended.

58. In any discussion regarding the possible exercise of discretion, the board shall ensure that no student in similar circumstances has been treated less favourably as a result of any particular decision. The reasons for recommending or not recommending a higher class of degree shall be recorded in the minutes of the proceedings. The minutes shall record the issues raised and the decisions reached, whilst maintaining, wherever possible, the anonymity of board members contributing to the debate. Chairs of Boards of Examiners should report in writing annually to the relevant Board of Studies on the exercise of discretion for the recent examination sessions. Reports should then be forwarded to faculty learning, teaching and student experience committees for review. No student shall be identified by name in this report.

N. Recording of Module Marks after Reassessment, Compensation or Discretion

59. Where a student has achieved a passing mark following reassessment at any stage, including the final stage, or has been deemed to have passed in an assessment by the exercise of compensation or discretion, the overall module mark used by the board of examiners shall be a mark of 40 for level 4-6 modules and 50 for level 7 modules, except for the purposes of compensation (Convention J34). The mark achieved by the student must be recorded on the

transcript, with an appropriate note if compensation or discretion has been applied, and a statement that a mark of 40 or 50 for the module as appropriate will be used in any calculations. However, in such cases, the board of examiners may, in its ultimate discretion, have regard to the actual mark obtained at resit.

P. Failing Performance by Integrated Masters Degree Students

60. A student who, following completion of Stage 4, has not been recommended for the award of a Masters (Hons) degree under Convention 50 or by the use of discretion under Convention 56, will be considered for the appropriate Stage 3 exit award (i.e. a BEng or BSc) under the Undergraduate Examination Conventions and applying the principles therein. If, in addition, a student has passed at least 60 credits at Stage 4, of which at least 40 credits are at level 7 and the remaining credits at level 6, they shall additionally be entitled to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate.

61. The award of a Postgraduate Certificate is not classified and, unless specific recognition arrangements are in place, carries no professional accreditation. The certificate will be '*Postgraduate Certificate in X*' corresponding to the '*Honours degree in X*' for which the student was a candidate.

62. Notwithstanding the above, a student may elect to be reassessed in some or all of the failed modules, subject to:

- i. The maximum recommendation available after reassessment is a lower second class (2:ii) honours Integrated Masters degree and discretion may not be applied to award a higher class than this;
- ii. In the event that the student's performance at reassessment is less than that at the first attempt, the assessment at the second attempt will be used to calculate the entitlement.

63. Students recommended by the board of examiners for the award of an Integrated Masters degree after the first occasion of assessment, may not enter for re-assessment.

64. Exceptionally, a student may be permitted to resit a module that has been passed at University standard, but not to external accreditation requirements. Such resits are for accreditation purposes only and stand outside of the University Examination Conventions. Final module marks and award calculations are not affected. Programme-specific arrangements for accreditation resits are included in the degree programme regulations <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>.

R. Recommendation of other than an Integrated Masters Degree

Conventions 62-64 of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions shall not apply to Integrated Masters programmes

Bachelors Degree

65. A candidate for an Integrated Masters degree who has satisfied the examiners in at least 360 credits, of which at least 90 credits are at level 6 or above, shall be awarded a Bachelors degree in that programme, typically when;

- a) the student is entitled to proceed into Stage 4, but instead elects to withdraw from study at the University; *or*
- b) the student elects to withdraw from study at the University during Stage 4 of the programme; *or*
- c) the student leaves the programme to transfer to an unrelated programme within the University, without carrying forward any credit; *or*
- d) the student fails to satisfy the examiners in Stage 4 of the programme.

66. The award and classification of the Bachelors Degree is calculated on the basis of the student's performance at the end of Stage 3 (first attempts) and following the principles laid out in *Undergraduate Examination Conventions M*. Unless specific recognition arrangements are in place the Bachelor award carries no professional accreditation. The Bachelors degree will be '*BSc/ BEng in X*' corresponding to the '*Integrated Masters degree in X*' for which the student was a candidate.

Higher Education Diploma

67. A candidate for an Integrated Masters degree who has satisfied the examiners in at least 240 credits, of which at least 90 credits are at level 5 or above, shall be awarded a Higher Education Diploma in that programme, typically when:

- a) the student is entitled to proceed into Stage 3, but instead elects to withdraw from study at the University; *or*
- b) the student elects to withdraw from study at the University during Stage 3 of the programme;
- c) the student leaves the programme to transfer to an unrelated programme within the University, without carrying forward any credit
- d) the student fails to satisfy the examiners in Stage 3 of the programme

68. The award of a Higher Education Diploma is not classified and, unless specific recognition arrangements are in place, carries no professional accreditation. The diploma will be '*Higher Education Diploma in X*' corresponding to the '*Honours degree in X*' for which the student was a candidate.

Higher Education Certificate

69. A candidate for an Integrated Masters degree who has satisfied the examiners in at least 120 credits, of which at least 90 are at level 4 or above, shall be awarded a Higher Education Certificate in that programme, typically when:

- a) the student is entitled to proceed into Stage 2, but instead elects to withdraw from study at the University; *or*
- b) the student elects to withdraw from study at the University during Stage 2 or Stage 3 of the programme;
- c) the student leaves the programme to transfer to an unrelated programme within the University, without carrying forward any credit
- d) the student fails to satisfy the examiners in Stage 2 or Stage 3 of the programme.

70. The award of a Higher Education Certificate is not classified and, unless specific recognition arrangements are in place, carries no professional accreditation. The certificate will be '*Higher Education Certificate in X*' corresponding to the '*Honours degree in X*' for which the student was a candidate.

S. Subsuming of Awards

71. A student awarded an Integrated Master's level honours degree will not be eligible for a Bachelor's Honours degree and/or a Higher Education Diploma / Certificate for the same programme of study. Similarly, students awarded a Higher Education Diploma will not be eligible for the award of a Higher Education Certificate for the same programme of study.

T. Mid-year Student Withdrawals

72. A student who withdraws from the University during the academic year will be considered for the appropriate exit award at the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Examiners.

U. Aegrotat

73. The board of examiners may award an Aegrotat degree to a student who has registered for the final stage of the programme but who presents sufficient evidence of ill health or any other extenuating circumstance such that, in the judgement of the board, there is no reasonable possibility that the student can complete the degree programme. When considering the option of recommending this award, boards of examiners should be mindful of the possibility of enabling the student to sit the assessments at a later date, and so be eligible for a classified degree. In addition, the board should consider the appropriateness of recommending the award of a Bachelor's degree.

74. It is not open to the board to grant an Aegrotat to students registered on certain professionally accredited programmes. A student to whom an Aegrotat

is awarded shall be deemed to have obtained Honours but without classification.

75. The Board of Examiners shall have the power to award a degree posthumously as it sees fit.

V. Retention of Assessed Work

Convention 74 of the Undergraduate Examination Conventions applies.

