

# **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

**FOR THE VALIDATED AWARDS  
OF NEW COLLEGE DURHAM**

**2026 – 27  
Edition**

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## Section A - Regulations Governing Validated Awards

This section describes under what authority the College can confer awards and establish regulations.

It also describes the types, titles, classifications and structure of the awards along with the credit framework and any scenarios under which awards may be revoked.

The section also identifies the UK Quality Frameworks underpinning the regulations.

### A1 Principles Underpinning the Regulations

A1.1 The Regulations must:

- a. be written so as to be clearly understood by students and other stakeholders;
- b. reflect the requirements and expectations of the Office for Students (OfS) and Designated Quality Body (DQB); and
- c. be objective through the involvement of suitably qualified independent people in the processes of awarding and of assessment.

A1.2 These principles reflect the commitment of the Corporation of the College to place students at the centre of the higher education process. Through the annual review process, students, and other foundation degree stakeholders, can inform the development of the Regulations to ensure that they are understandable, comprehensive, fair, and satisfy the requirements of the DQB and relevant Professional Statutory & Regulatory Body accreditation (PSRBs).

### A2 Awarding Powers

A2.1 The Corporation of New College Durham (the College) was granted approval to award Foundation Degrees by Privy Council on 28 July 2011. The power became effective from 1st August 2011. In July 2023 the College was granted indefinite approval to award Foundation Degrees.

A2.2 **College validated awards** up to and including Foundation Degrees are conferred through the exercise of this power.

A2.3 The Corporation of New College Durham is the duly constituted body with responsibility for ensuring that the power to award is exercised in accordance with the grant and exercised in line with the requirements and expectations of the OfS and DQB. Responsibility for the exercise of its powers is by and through the College Principal and Chief Executive and

delegated authorised responsible officers. In carrying out these functions the Principal is required to report back to the Corporation on the exercise of these powers on a regular basis.

Where these regulations grant powers of impose responsibilities on the College and upon the College Principal, such powers and responsibilities may be discharged through a duly authorised delegated body or individual.

- A2.4 College validated awards are defined with reference to the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

### **A3 Academic Regulations for College Validated Awards**

- A3.1 The Principal is responsible for the approval of the Academic Regulations for Validated Awards of New College Durham (the Regulations). This process is completed through consultation with the Academic Board. The approval, validation, modification, and review of all awards offered by the College are governed by these Regulations.
- A3.2 The Regulations are supplemented by a series of policies and procedures and should be read in conjunction with them.
- A3.3 The Regulations are subject to annual review. The annual review is informed by observations from students, academic staff, External Examiners, Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB), and other stakeholders with a direct interest in the regulatory framework.
- A3.4 Any approved revisions will be incorporated into the definitive set of regulations applying to the following academic year of study. This will be published at the commencement of the academic year. The Regulations apply to higher education students entering the College in or after September of an academic year. They will progress through each level of their programme of study under these regulations. Any variation of the Regulations cannot operate retrospectively and must be approved through the College published procedure.
- A3.5 The Regulations are intended to be written in a way which makes them accessible to students, and all students should be made aware of the content, status and location of the Regulations when they commence their studies.

### **A4 Authority for Approval, Review, and Termination of Awards**

- A4.1 The responsibility for undertaking the authority for approval, review and termination of awards is carried out in accordance with the published

procedure.

- A4.2 In carrying out these functions, regular reports are provided via the published schedules incorporating a review of approval and review activities that have taken place since the previous report. Reports will be provided to the Academic Board through the appropriate management or committee structure, for consideration. The report contains a review of the approval and review activity that has taken place during the previous academic year.
- A4.3 The Principal is responsible for approving all new College validated awards.
- A4.4 The College may grant the following degree designations:
- Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)
  - Foundation Degree Arts (FdA)
  - Foundation Degree Education (FdEd)
  - Foundation Degree Engineering (FdEng)
  - Foundation Degree Science (FdSc)
- A4.5 The College defines the awards by reference to the credits achieved and the level at which they have been achieved.
- a. A student will be eligible to receive a Certificate of Higher Education, having successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4.
  - b. A student will be eligible to receive a Foundation Degree having successfully completed 120 credits at Level 4, and 120 credits at Level 5.
- N.B. Please also refer to Section C8 Compensation of Modules.
- A4.6 A title must be given to each approved programme leading to the award of foundation degree. The title must be approved in accordance with the College's validation process and may not be changed without formal approval by the College. The title must be simple and accurate.
- A4.7 The title should accord, as a description of programme content, with the normal expectations of higher education bodies, relevant professional bodies, students and employers about the level of knowledge and skills to be expected from a person holding such a qualification.
- A4.8 The College's recommended practice for the allocation of programme titles is that normally single subject titles should be used. However, it is permissible to have a title that connects two discipline subject areas together using 'and' or 'with'. Titles should be such that each separate award is clearly distinguishable from other validated awards of the College.

The construction of titles is covered in sections B3.6 and B3.7 of these regulations.

- A4.9 The Principal is responsible for final approval of all new title awards of the College, validated under these Regulations and reporting through the appropriate structure.
- A4.10 Any change to an award title must be made in accordance with the published procedure. The proposed alternative title must be supported by a rationale that explains why the new title is considered necessary and appropriate to the award.
- A4.11 An award will be subject to periodic review one year before its re-validation date.
- A4.12 Extensions to this period of approval will only be considered with a strong rationale and must be approved in accordance with the published procedure.
- A4.13 Delivery of a new award may commence only when all conditions have been met to the satisfaction of the Chair of the Validation Panel and the programme has been formally approved by the Principal as a validated award. Until formal confirmation has been granted a proposed new programme may only be promoted by the College with the words “This programme is pending subject to New College Durham Validation” immediately following the title of the proposed award wherever and whenever details of the proposed programme are published.
- A4.14 Information detailing the approved structure, and supplementary modifications to that structure, are required to be held by the College in perpetuity.

## **A5 Awards Withdrawn from the College Portfolio**

- A5.1 Under certain circumstances, a decision to withdraw an approved College validated award may be taken, and it is the responsibility of the Principal to approve or reject such a decision. A validated award can only be terminated through a determination of the Academic Board.
- A5.2 When an award ceases to recruit students, the School will take appropriate action to ensure that:
  - a. standards are maintained for any students remaining on the award;
  - b. students are transferred to a suitable alternative award subject to their

individual acceptance of these arrangements; and

- c. to ensure that all validation records are formally transferred to the Academic Registry.

- A5.3 Where a validated award has not recruited students for a period of two consecutive academic years the College will take steps to review or terminate the award.
- A5.4 Under these Regulations it is the responsibility of the Heads of School to monitor recruitment to validated awards of the College for this purpose, and to advise the College of any award which falls within regulation A5.3.
- A5.5 Where a validated award is to be terminated for any other reason than A5.3, permission to terminate can only be granted by the Principal. Permission will only be granted in these circumstances, where the interests of any students enrolled on the programme have been protected. This will mean that appropriate arrangements have been put in place to allow existing students to be able to complete their programme of study.

## **A6 Award Framework**

- A6.1 The College adopts a credit-based system for its validated awards, and it defines these awards primarily in terms of the level and volume of credit required for each.
- A6.2 The level of credit assigned must be determined taking account of:
  - a. the range of learning outcomes being accredited;
  - b. qualification descriptors as set out in the relevant national qualifications framework for an award; and
  - c. any UK national indicators established for the subject area in question.
- A6.3 The assignment of credit to learning must conform to the following principles:
  - a. credit is allocated to a module and its learning outcomes assessed. An individual student will achieve that credit by achieving those learning outcomes;
  - b. credit can only be assigned on the evidence of assessed learning. Where no assessment takes place or that assessment has neither been appropriately conducted nor verified, credit cannot be assigned;

- c. the number of credit points assigned is independent of the standard of the pass. Students achieving higher standards cannot be allocated additional credit points. The higher standard should be reflected in the mark given and classification of the pass; and
  - d. for the same credits to be assigned to the same learning programme across time, place and mode of learning, the quality assurance processes in place must ensure consistency of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- A6.4 The main determinant for the volume of credit is notional learning. This is defined as the reasonable measure of the time it would take for a student, adequately supported, to achieve the learning outcomes of the activity.
- A6.5 Total notional student learning time, as indicated in the award definitive documentation, includes all activities required to achieve the learning outcomes of a programme, including assessment and independent learning.
- A6.6 Notional learning time for a 'standard' full-time academic year is 1200 hours at undergraduate level. This notional learning time is based upon the allocation of 10 learning hours for a single credit.
- A6.7 Delivery of an award may be by full-time or part-time attendance.

## **A7 Requirements for Awards**

- A7.1 To obtain an award a student must successfully achieve the requisite number of credits at each level, as identified in section A4.
- A7.2 In addition, a student may be required to fulfil other academic commitments as specified in the award specific regulations.
- A7.3 A student may choose to withdraw from the College prior to completion of their full programme. If they have successfully met the conditions to be offered an 'exit' Certificate of Higher Education, they may be considered for an award at the next appropriate meeting of an assessment board.

An exit award is a qualification which may be awarded on successful completion of an intermediate point in the studies in a longer programme of study (when a student leaves the programme) but for which the student has not registered at the outset.

A7.4 A student who, by completion of programme requirements has received, or is eligible to receive, an award, may not submit additional work for assessment for the purpose of improving an award.

A7.5 Credits gained for a module may be counted towards a single College validated award, or towards a named exit award.

## A8 Award Classifications

A8.1 A College validated award is conferred for the achievement of the required number of credits, either outright or by compensation in accordance with the regulations in section A4.5. Where a failure in any module has been compensated, the module mark will be adjusted to the higher mark of 40%.

This mark will be used for the calculation of the final award where applicable. The award is calculated based on marks obtained from modules delivered and assessed by New College Durham. The overall grade of a Foundation Degree is determined based on the most favourable outcome to the student by using the following methods:

- a. the weighted average of the aggregated overall marks for best 100 module credits at Level 5 and the best 20 module credits at Level 4; or,
- b. the weighted average of the aggregated overall marks of all awarded credits at Level 5<sup>1</sup>.
- c. Foundation degrees will be awarded as follows:
  - i. Foundation Degree with Distinction is awarded to students who have demonstrated a defined profile of at least 70%.
  - ii. Foundation Degree with Commendation is awarded to students who have demonstrated a defined profile of 60% and no more than 69%.
  - iii. Foundation Degree with Merit is awarded to students who have demonstrated a defined profile of 50% and no more than 59%.
  - iv. Students who have demonstrated a defined profile of no less than 40% and no more than 49% will be awarded a Foundation Degree at a Pass level.

A8.2 A Certificate of Higher Education will be awarded at a Pass level.

A8.3 Credits imported by the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) are not used in calculating the award.

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<sup>1</sup> Excluding pass/fail credits (see C3.3.6) as only graded credits are used in the calculation

## **A9 Foundation Degree Award Titles, Parchments and Records**

- A9.1 A student who successfully achieves an award will receive a parchment issued by the College as formal evidence of the achievement of the award.
- A9.2 A replacement parchment will only be issued by the College following a personal request in writing from the holder of the award, who will be required to provide an explanation for the request. Where the request is granted a charge for the replacement parchment will normally be made.
- A9.3 Students who are conferred an award of level 4 or above will be invited to attend the next graduation ceremony held by the College.
- A9.4 For awards conferred by the College for Level 4 and above, students studying at a partner institution will be invited to a graduation ceremony organized by the partner institution.
- A9.5 All students achieving a College validated award will have their names and the full details of their award entered onto the Register. The Register will be the definitive document of record held by the College in relation to College validated awards.
- A9.6 In addition to the relevant parchment students will receive a transcript and a diploma supplement.
- A9.7 Upon completing each level of their award, students will receive a record of their academic progress to date.
- A9.8 Students who do not complete a programme of study on which they are enrolled leading to the award of foundation degree but who have successfully achieved 120 Level 4 credits will be entitled to obtain a Certificate of Higher Education in the subject they have been studying.

## **A10 Revocation of Awards or Credits**

- A10.1 The College may revoke an award and all privileges and rights associated with that award, including any credits conferred by an Assessment Board, where it is established that a person who has followed a programme of study has obtained an award or entrance to a programme by fraud or deception or where other circumstances come to light after the award is made which if known at the time, would have meant that the award would not have been made.
- A10.2 Where such fraud or deception is alleged, a recommendation for revocation of award or credits must be made to the Principal by the Chair of the

relevant Progression and Award Board.

A10.3 If a decision to revoke the award is made, a notice of revocation will be issued. The individual concerned may appeal this decision via the College's Academic Appeals Procedure.

## **A11 Quality Assurance**

A11.1 The assurance of the academic quality and standards of the validated awards of New College Durham is essential to ensure public confidence in the integrity of the awards and to protect the interests of its students and graduates. The College will take any action it considers necessary to protect the powers granted to it by Privy Council to protect the quality and standards of its validated awards.

A11.2 In the exercise of its awarding powers the College is subject to the requirements and expectations of UK Higher Education. Supported by the national frameworks as represented by OfS and DQB. The UK Code of Practice for Higher Education provides a framework for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, national frameworks for higher education qualifications, subject benchmark statements and a range of associated guidelines. Together these publications represent a suite of external reference points against which all higher education programmes leading to an award are referenced.

A11.3 The College requires those of its Schools offering validated awards to demonstrate a full knowledge and understanding of these reference points and to take account of them in their quality assurance arrangements, programme submissions and delivery.

## Section B - Regulations Covering the Design, Approval, Validation, Monitoring and Review of College Awards

This section describes the requirements for the design of College programmes as well as how they are approved (validated) and then monitored and reviewed to ensure relevance and adherence to quality frameworks.

### B1 The Design, Approval, Validation and Review of College Awards

- B1.1 The Corporation of New College Durham (the College) under its authority of Foundation Degree Awarding Powers is responsible for setting the standards of its degrees within the context of common guidelines (such as subject benchmark statements, professional body requirements) and is subject to internal quality assurance procedures.
- B1.2 All proposed awards of the College are required to undergo formal academic approval prior to delivery. The regulations governing the design, approval, validation and review of College validated awards are supplemented by processes and procedures and should be read in conjunction with them.
- B1.3 All approved awards of the College are required to undergo a continual monitoring and review process. This will include the views of all key stakeholders.
- B1.4 Staff engaged in the design, validation, approval, and periodic review of New College Durham awards must be fully informed and conversant of the regulations, processes and procedures associated with such activities.

### B2 Programme Design

- B2.1 The principles underpinning the design of a new programme, or major modification to existing provision, are such that programme teams must:
- a. take due account of external reference points such as subject benchmark statements, national frameworks for higher education qualifications, national occupational standards and, where appropriate, the requirements of PSRBs and any relevant national legislation or commitments to European and International processes;
  - b. ensure the programme design takes account of employer's views;
  - c. ensure the programme design takes account of student views;
  - d. ensure compatibility of the programme design with the College mission

and strategy and any cross-college approach adopted for the provision;

- e. ensure that the proposed design facilitates the delivery of the intended aims and learning outcomes of the programme; and
- f. establish the necessary resource planning and identify the level of risk involved in any new proposal.

B2.2 The FHEQ determines how many credits must be achieved to complete a level (or stage, as it is sometimes called). 120 credits must be achieved at Level 4, and 120 at Level 5.

Award Title	FHEQ Qualification Level	Overall Number of Credits Required	Levels of Credit Required
Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)	4	120	120 at any UG level
Foundation Degree (FD)	5	240	120 at level 5 120 at level 4

B2.3 What is broadly expected of students studying at Level 4 and Level 5 is nationally determined by the DQB for Higher Education within the FHEQ. Level 5 is higher than Level 4, and this is reflected in what the FHEQ states a student who has completed Level 4 studies will be expected to demonstrate at Level 5.

B2.4 The typical College structure for each year of study for a College validated award consists of six modules at each level, each made up of 20 credits. However, any of the following module sizes are permissible with approval:

Credit rating	Notional learning hours
5	50
10	100
15	150
20	200
30	300
40	400

B2.5 All College validated awards must embed the principles of personal and professional development and work-related learning.

B2.6 An award title incorporating ‘and’ to connect 2 subject disciplines must have equally weighted subject components to be a true reflection of the award title. An award structure would normally contain, as a minimum, 40 credits of

mandatory subject components of each discipline area at each level. Work related learning must enable a student to experience both subject disciplines. The award structure may utilise either or both core and designated options only.

<b>Level 4</b>	20 credits subject A	20 credits subject A	20 credits subject B	20 credits subject B	20 credits PPD	20 credits WRL
<b>Level 5</b>	20 credits subject A	20 credits subject A	20 credits subject B	20 credits subject B	20 credits PPD	20 credits WRL

B2.7 An award title incorporating ‘with’, to connect 2 subject disciplines must have sufficient ancillary component to allow both subject titles to be a true reflection of the award structure. An award structure would normally contain, as a minimum, 60 credits of mandatory components of the principal specialist discipline area and 20 credits of mandatory components of the subsidiary specialist discipline at each level. Work Related Learning must enable a student to experience the principal specialist discipline and may also incorporate an experience of the minor subject discipline. The award structure may utilise either or both core and designated options only.

<b>Level 4</b>	20 credits subject A	20 credits subject A	20 credits subject A	20 credits subject B	20 credits PPD	20 credits WRL
<b>Level 5</b>	20 credits subject A	20 credits subject A	20 credits subject A	20 credits subject B	20 credits PPD	20 credits WRL

B2.8 Types of modules are as follows:

- a. Core: a mandatory module.
- b. Option: a module that a student must choose from a group offered within the programme.
- c. Designated Option: A programme may determine the options to be studied in order to inform the specific award title that the student is seeking. Such options are referred to as designated options. For example, a student must choose;
  - one module from either of the 2 designated options listed;
  - two modules from a group of the 3 designated options listed, etc.
- d. Pre-requisite: a module which a student must pass or have been credited with through Recognition of Prior Learning before progressing to the next level. Pre-requisites are not permitted within a level.

- e. Generic: a module which is core for more than one programme. There may only be one version of the module in use at any one time.
  - f. Common: a module which is core for more than one programme, but which may have various editions. The module will have an identical title, level, credit size, aims, and normally the same learning outcomes, however these, as well as the assessment methods, may vary slightly to allow contextualisation to the programme sector.
- B2.9 Pass/fail modules are permitted and will normally only be approved in circumstances such as where there is a PSRB or similar professional requirement. The maximum number of credits which may be pass/fail should be agreed at validation on a case-by-case basis.
- B2.10 All programmes share a common structure. For each level of the programme there is a set of learning outcomes which are expressed in general terms. These programme level learning outcomes summarise the knowledge, skills and behaviours a student will have gained by the end of the programme.
- B2.11 Programme learning outcomes are achieved through the study of individual modules at each level. A student must be able to achieve a programme level learning outcome through the study of more than one module.
- B2.12 Modules are discrete units of assessed learning with specific aims and learning outcomes. Module outcomes are expressed in a language that is compatible with the FHEQ level that is being assessed. They can be categorised in the same way as programme learning outcomes i.e. knowledge and understanding, and skills. Each module is given a credit rating which indicates the amount of notional learning time which the typical student is expected to spend to achieve the learning outcomes. A module must be either fully graded or non-graded (i.e. pass/fail).
- B2.13 Credit is awarded for the achievement of the specified learning outcomes of the module. Credit is accumulated sequentially, by level. This means that as a student progresses through a programme, they build up credits as and when they successfully complete modules. Credits are nationally recognised and may be transferable and accredited towards another similar or equivalent programme of study at the discretion of the relevant awarding body through recognition of prior learning and confirmation from the External Examiner.
- B2.14 It is recommended that a 20-credit module will normally have four learning outcomes. Modules with a lower credit value may have proportionately fewer learning outcomes and those with a higher credit value may have proportionately more.

- B2.15 Learning time includes both contact time and independent learning, including assessment and independent learning. A 20-credit module represents at least 200 hours of student learning activity (10 learning hours per single credit). An example for full time delivery may include lectures, seminars, tutorials and independent study. There is no minimum specified contact time required under the terms of these Regulations. The contact time allocated to modules should be based upon judgments about the nature and complexity of the learning outcomes for the module and the learning needs of the students who will be undertaking the modules.
- B2.16 For the purposes of these Regulations: contact time is defined as any study undertaken under the direct supervision of a module tutor and includes but is not limited to lectures, seminars, and workshops; directed learning is learning activity which a module tutor has instructed students to undertake but which is not subject to direct supervision; assessed work is the time devoted to preparing for and carrying out any form of assessment used in the module; and independent study is work a student carries out to support their learning which has not been directed by the module tutor and is therefore independent learning.
- B2.17 Each approved module is expressed within a module specification. The module specification must specify:
- a. the module title;
  - b. the number of credits attached to it and the level of those credits;
  - c. the learning outcomes;
  - d. the indicative content;
  - e. assessment details of the teaching and learning strategy used in its delivery;
  - f. the resources used to support it including a reading list;
  - g. the person responsible for leading the module; and
  - h. the delivery mode for the module.
- B2.18 The College delivery model is normally using a semesterised structure, in which each year of study is divided into two study periods of equal length. These are semesters. The standard delivery arrangement is that in each of the semesters making up the award there will be three 20 credit modules, students complete 60 credits within each semester. This standard delivery

arrangement may be varied where an alternative model better supports the learning needs of the students. A variation to this model is permissible with approval carried out in accordance with the published procedure. A change or addition to an approved model of delivery must be approved in accordance with the College's major modification procedure.

B2.19 Each module should be supported by a module guide, which is designed to provide students with the information they require to be able to study it successfully. The guide will be available on the College VLE.

### **B3 Approval of an Award**

B3.1 The formal system adopted under these Regulations to govern the approval, including validation of all new awards and the revalidation of existing awards, is designed:

- a. to secure and promote planned and managed growth and development within the context of the College's Higher Education Strategy;
- b. to stimulate thinking about programme development and content to ensure the provision of high-quality programmes for students;
- c. to ensure that programme teams collaborate widely in the design of programmes;
- d. to secure and promote the contribution of peers to programme development; and
- e. to ensure that new programme proposals address any relevant policies and requirements as laid down by the College Regulations, PSRBs and the DQB.

B3.2 The nature of programme validation is associated with judgments about the validity of proposals. Programme documentation submitted for consideration is in essence a collection of statements of intent. The validation process is centrally concerned with ensuring that such statements of intent are clear and well thought out, educationally sound, coherent, consistent, responsive, and matched to identified needs.

B3.3 Awards of the College acquire their validity by completing the procedure set out by the College for programme approval. The approval procedure is described in the supplementary processes and procedures of these Regulations.

B3.4 The record of each stage in the procedure must be minuted and the full

record of the progression of a proposed award is required to be maintained electronically for the period of validation of the programme as evidence that the award has been formally approved and validated.

B3.5 No award may proceed to delivery without final approval by the Principal.

## **B4 Review of an Award**

B4.1 Each programme is subject to annual review. This is a process of self-evaluation carried out annually by programme teams to consider the effectiveness of their programme in achieving its stated aims and the success of students in attaining the intended learning outcomes. It enables a team to ensure they are maintaining the academic, and where relevant, practise-based threshold standards as well as providing trend analysis of key performance measures.

B4.2 The annual review draws upon feedback on the standards and quality of provision from External Examiners, students, stakeholders, and staff. The annual review process is described in the supplementary processes and procedures of these Regulations.

B4.3 An External Examiner will be appointed to each programme of study to provide confirmation that the standards of performance being achieved by students and the appropriateness of the assessments being undertaken by students at all levels are of a comparable minimum standard to those found in other higher education institutions in the United Kingdom.

B4.4 Students will be surveyed annually for their opinion of their experience whilst undertaking their programme of study. As a minimum they should be asked to provide feedback on the quality of their experience of teaching, learning, assessment, support and guidance, resources, and where relevant work placement and personal development.

B4.5 Each programme is subject to periodic review. An award will be subject to periodic review one year before its re-validation date. It will enable a programme of study to be critically appraised by a panel of peers, and through which plans for change are considered and their validity confirmed. This is to enhance programme development and delivery and to confirm that the programme continues to meet the requirements for validated awards of the College.

B4.6 Subject to regulation B3.5 no award can be re-approved for a further period of approval that has not successfully completed the stages of periodic review process.

## B5 Award Study Framework

- B5.1 The mode of study, which may be **part-time** or **full-time**, will usually determine the load a student may complete in a single stage. The load refers to the number of credits and would normally be 120 credits per full-time year of study. A full-time student would normally study these credits over two College semesters per year (32 weeks), and an average of at least 21 hours guided learning per week (not including independent study).

Part time programmes usually have a lower load (ie less than 120 credits per year) and a reduced number of study hours. Study hours will be proportionate to the load.

The load(s) and mode(s) of study for each programme will be determined at the time of programme approval.

- B5.2 The normal duration period of study for a student to complete an award will be determined by their mode of study. However, the duration of a student's studies may be affected and become longer than originally planned for. For example, a student may apply for an interruption to their studies if they have relevant extenuating circumstances (known as a suspension of study), or a student may (due to academic failure or extenuating circumstances) be required to repeat some elements of the programme. To ensure currency of the knowledge and skills a student gains whilst studying the following definitive duration periods for a student to complete their programme of study has been determined.

Normal duration period	Definitive duration period
12 months	3 years
18 Months	3 years
2 years	4 years
3 years	5 years
4 years	6 years

- B5.3 In addition to taught /contact time, students are expected to undertake sufficient independent/private study to meet the Notional Learning Time associated with modules.
- B5.4 Other than in approved cases (such as where recognition of prior learning is approved) students are expected to undertake all elements of assessment associated with individual modules.
- B5.5 Other than in the case of specialist language modules, the language of tuition and assessment for all College foundation degrees is English.

## Section C - Regulations Governing Assessment and Progression

This section describes how a student is assessed on their programme and how the award is calculated and conferred.

It includes details of the circumstances in which students may re-sit, resubmit work or retake modules.

It establishes the rules in relation to Academic Integrity and Academic Appeals.

### C1 Introduction

- C1.1 This section of the Regulations sets out the assessment framework for the Academic Awards of New College Durham Foundation Degrees. The Regulations may be varied to meet other awarding bodies requirements including Pearson, Open University or with programmes of Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) only with the approval of the HE Strategic Approval panel.

### C2 Definition and Purpose of Assessment

- C2.1 Assessment is the means used to confirm whether a student has achieved the learning outcomes associated with the programme, and the level of that performance.
- C2.2 The measurement of a student's performance is expressed as a percentage unless there is a competency-based assessment whereby performance may be expressed using an alternative scale such as pass/fail. Student assessment is attached solely to performance in the modules making up the programme of study.
- C2.3 Summative assessment provides a reference point for students and academic staff, recording achievement and progress within a programme. It also informs the determination of the overall classification which a student achieves. An award classification is of value to employers in making judgements about the suitability of applicants for jobs, and to higher education institutions and professional bodies when making decisions about the potential of applicants seeking to undertake further qualifications offered by such bodies.
- C2.4 These assessment regulations are underpinned by the requirement that students are entitled to receive feedback on both their formative and summative assessment, which is timely and evaluative, to enable them to develop and strengthen the quality of the work they submit for assessment purposes as they progress through their programme. Feedback should

normally be made available to a student no later than four College weeks following the submission of the assessment.

- C2.5 Students are entitled to expect guidance regarding the criteria being used to measure their performance in assessments before they begin the assessment activity.

### C3 Management of Assessment Results

- C3.1 Assessment outcomes are determined in two phases: that for the module and that for the programme. To manage this process, the College operates Module Assessment Boards and Progression and Award Boards for each programme.

Board Outcome	Student Status
Pass Award	Passed all modules, award conferred.
Pass Proceed	Passed all modules at current level, progress to next level.
Exit Award Offered	Passed all modules at specified level, unable to complete full programme.
Fail Level	At least one module failed at this level, no progression or award possible.
Fail Withdraw	At least one failed module retake, no further opportunity to complete programme. Student may be offered an Exit award if a level has been achieved.
Level Incomplete (Defer)	Student has second attempt at module component submission with mitigation to extend submission deadline.
Level Incomplete (Refer)	Student has second attempt at module component submission (no mitigation agreed); capped at 40%.

#### C3.2 Module Assessment Board (MAB)

- C3.2.1 Programmes with modules which are due to be completed at the end of a semester will have a Module Assessment Board to confirm the marks of modules.
- C3.2.2 A module outcome, pass or fail, is determined by a Module Assessment Board and is based upon the aggregation of the component parts of assessment, each separately weighted, to determine an overall grade. The outcome decision is taken at a point when the final assessment component has been completed.
- C3.2.3 The responsibility of each Module Assessment Board is to make its judgment on student performance based upon approved terms of reference and to record these using the approved assessment codes and recording templates.

- C3.2.4 All modules must be assessed in accordance with their published assessment methods. Module assessments must be submitted by fixed dates during the year. These deadlines are determined by the programme team at the beginning of each academic year. Students must be given details at the start of a module of the assessment scheme for the module, and of the arrangements and timetable according to which assessed work must be submitted. Students are required to submit coursework as prescribed by the relevant module guide.
- C3.2.5 Module assessment marks are normally presented to the first appropriate Module Assessment Board after the last component of assessment is due for that module where an overall grade for the module will be determined.
- C3.2.6 It may be necessary for a decision to be determined by Chair's Action within an allocated time period before the next full Board meeting is scheduled to take place. This is only permitted where clear guidance on the decision outcome has been pre-determined by the Module Assessment Board at the time of the re-assessment decision being made. The outcome of the Chair's Action must be presented as matters arising at the next full meeting of the Board.

### **C3.3 Progression and Award Board (PAB)**

- C3.3.1 The responsibility of each Progression and Award Board is to make its judgment on student performance based upon approved terms of reference and to record these using the approved progression codes and recording templates.
- C3.3.2 The outcome at a programme level is based upon a student's achievement profile across a level, or stage if a student is studying a level over more than one academic year. A progress decision and, where relevant, an award classification is determined by the Progression and Award Board. This progress decision or award classification is based upon overall module grades and module outcomes received from the Module Assessment Boards. Where deemed to be appropriate, combined Module Assessment Boards and Progression and Award Board may be held. These are referred to as Module and Progression Award Boards (MPAB).
- C3.3.3 Progression and Award Boards are held when students on a programme have completed each stage and/or level of their programme. At the end of Level 4, a Board must decide whether a student is eligible to progress to the next level. If a student is studying in stages which do not fit with the normal delivery of a full level per academic year, a Board will be required to progress a student to the next academic year if they have not yet reached the end of a level.

- C3.3.4 At the end of Level 5, the Board must decide whether the student is eligible for the award of foundation degree, and if so, what their classification is. These Boards are usually held at the end of the second semester of delivery of each year of study, after the Module Assessment Board for the programme has met. If a Progression and Award Board is unable to complete all its work because there are students on the programme who must undertake further assessment it will reconvene on a further occasion to consider the result of these further assessments. This will normally be at the end of the next semester of delivery (or after summer recess, where applicable).
- C3.3.5 As specified in regulation A8 an award is calculated on the basis of the marks obtained from the modules taught and assessed by New College Durham.
- C3.3.6 The classification of an award is calculated on the basis of graded marks obtained from modules delivered and assessed by New College Durham. This will exclude pass/fail modules. The classification categories are pass, merit, commendation and distinction (Section A.8). The classification a student is eligible to receive is determined by the Progression and Award Board through the application of the Regulations as they apply to Foundation Degree classifications.
- C3.3.7 A student who has studied additional modules to those which make up their award may not use the assessment of such modules to contribute to the assessment of the student's primary programme of study nor classification of their award.

## **C4 Assessment of Modules**

- C4.1 Module leaders are responsible for providing in a timely fashion all relevant information regarding an assessment, including details as to date, time, place and format of submission and any arrangements for obtaining a receipt for work handed in. Students are responsible for ensuring they meet the deadline and requirements of the assessment submission. Failure to comply without appropriate evidence of extenuating circumstances will determine a fail.
- C4.2 The overall pass mark for each module is 40% unless specified otherwise. Components of assessment where marked with a numerical grade will be marked and presented in whole percentages. The calculation for weighted overall grade for a module should be rounded up if 0.5 or above and rounded down if 0.4 or below.

- C4.3 To pass a module, a student must attempt all component parts of assessment. Failure to attempt a component without appropriate evidence of extenuating circumstances will determine a fail.
- C4.4 The overall pass mark for each module is 40% unless the module is pass/fail. Where a module assessment comprises two or more components, the student must achieve at least 30% in each assessed component and an overall average for the module of 40% to achieve a module pass. This will have been approved at validation.

Additionally, a minimum level of achievement for any of the components for the module may be required to meet PSRB requirements or the credit of other awarding bodies. This will have been approved as part of the validation for the programme.

- C4.5 Extension to Assessment Deadline - A student may apply for an extension to an assessment deadline up to 24 hours before the deadline with evidence. If the evidence is accepted by a programme leader, a period of 7 calendar days will be granted without penalty. Application for extension must be completed in writing and be reported to the relevant module assessment board and progression and award board.
- C4.6 An assessment which is submitted after the published deadline without an approved extension will be subject to penalty. The penalty is that the student will automatically have the assessment capped at 40% immediately after the deadline has passed and will have 7 calendar days to submit the assessment following the assessment deadline. The first working day will be the next working day after the original assessment deadline. Work submitted after the 7 calendar days will be determined a non-submission and a fail.

It is permissible for a student to be granted an extension without penalty for 7 days by the module leader and take a further 7-day extension with penalty. The regulation applies equally to full-time and part-time students.

- C4.7 An assignment which is not submitted to the correct published place which is authorised to receive it will be treated as a non-submission and determined a fail unless previously agreed.
- C4.8 A student who fails to attend an examination or other form of assessment whose performance requires attendance at that published time and date, such as a presentation, without prior authorisation or extenuating circumstances will be treated as a non-submission and determined as a fail.

- C4.9 Where a module has a specific pre-requisite module, that module must be passed before a student may proceed to the requiring module. A compensated failure is counted as a pass for these purposes.
- C4.10 A student who has passed a module at the first attempt may not retake the module to attempt to achieve a higher mark, unless the student's performance is judged to have been affected by extenuating circumstances and where the Progression and Award Board approves it.
- C4.11 Where a student has failed to submit a component of assessment, has been given the opportunity to resubmit and has failed to do so without any extenuating circumstances having been established, they will be deemed to have failed the module and will be required to retake the module as described in C5.8 and, where relevant, will not be allowed to progress to the next level or achieve the award.

## **C5 Re-assessment of Modules**

- C5.1 See [Appendix A](#) for a diagram showing the submission and marking process.
- C5.2 When a student fails to meet the criteria for an assessment at the first attempt, they will be offered the opportunity of reassessment in that component, once only.
- C5.3 Students must be given clear guidance within a module guide whether a piece of assessed work can be resubmitted where a component was failed or whether the nature of the assessment will require completion of a new assessment task. This resubmission will be offered on release of module feedback. Students will be given 6 weeks to complete this resubmission. If it is a formal exam, students will be given the date of the scheduled resit from the module guide.
- C5.4 Some modules are delivered and assessed across semester one and semester two. Where a component of assessment is failed at the first attempt in semester one, a resubmission date will be given at the time the student receives feedback. A student will normally need to undertake the resubmission within six weeks.

Details of reassessment opportunities, both resubmission and resit, must be issued to the student in writing with their feedback. The initial grade and the reassessed grade will be presented to the next meeting of the Module Assessment Board, where an overall grade for the module can then be determined.

- C5.5 When a student is reassessed in a module, the marks obtained in the component of assessment passed at the first attempt shall stand whereas the maximum mark that may be awarded for the reassessed component is 40%. Reassessed work will be marked from a full range of marks and feedback given based on that mark.  
The overall mark for the module will be calculated using the original marks for the components passed at the first attempt and the capped marks gained in the reassessed component(s).
- C5.6 In exceptional cases i.e. where the assessment method is no longer available or appropriate, a Programme Lead, as identified in the validation document, with the approval of the External Examiner, has the discretion to set a different type of assessment for the reassessed piece of work as long as it assesses the same learning outcomes. This temporary change must be noted at the next available HE Approvals Committee. In addition the relevant Module Assessment Board must be notified.
- C5.7 Up to 120 Level 4 and Level 5 credits may be re-assessed in this way, unless specified otherwise through a programme specific regulation.
- C5.8 When a student has failed a module at both the first attempt and second attempt, they may attempt the module again. This is a **Module Retake**.

In the case of a stage 4 student, they must remain at the same stage and may not register to study modules at level 5.

The student will be given one of the following opportunities for progression by the Progression and Award Board, at its discretion:

- a. If the student has failed modules equating to less than 40 credits, they may be offered the opportunity to undertake a further resubmission on each failed component without attendance, each capped at 40 marks. This will only be offered where the student has made first and second submissions in the component. The costs in this case will be detailed in the College's Fees Policy.
- b. If the student has failed modules equating to 40 or 50 credits, they may be offered the opportunity to retake the failed modules in their entirety with attendance at full cost. They will retake as if for the first time with the full range of marks and submission options. In the case of a stage 4 student, they must remain at the same stage and may not register to study modules at level 5. The student will be required to retake all the components of module assessment and no marks from previous attempts will be carried forward.

- c. If the student has failed modules equating to 60 credits or more, they will need to apply for retakes and will need to demonstrate significant exceptional circumstances before being allowed to return to complete the retakes. Retakes would be with attendance. Any allowance to return will be subject to a Learning Agreement. Students who cannot demonstrate sufficient grounds for exceptional circumstances or are unable to agree to and adhere to a Learning Agreement, will be withdrawn from the programme. In the case of a level 4 student, they must remain at the same stage and may not register to study modules at level 5. The student will be required to retake all the components of module assessment and no marks from previous attempts will be carried forward.

C5.9 A Progression and Award Board has the discretion to allow a student to **Carry Forward** a module or a component of assessment of a module to the next academic year. This is only when a student has not been able to complete the assessment or reassessment process and this non completion is attributable to extenuating circumstances which have been accepted by the Progression and Award Board, and where related to a PSRB is permissible.

A student will not normally be permitted to carry forward a module which is a pre-requisite to a module at a higher level and if approved to do so must successfully complete the pre-requisite module before starting the higher-level module.

A student may only be permitted to carry forward a maximum of 20 credits.

## C6 Progression from One Stage or Level of Study to the Next

C6.1 A Progression and Award Board must make a progression decision on each student at the end of each academic year.

C6.2 In circumstances where a PAB is unable to make a progression decision at the time of the meeting the Board may agree that the Chair can make a decision on their behalf. The Board must clearly define the parameters of the decision a Chair may take on their behalf based upon the different scenario outcomes of the circumstances. The progress decision noted at the time of the meeting will be a Chair's Action. This decision must be updated to a progression decision as shown in C7.1. Once an outcome has been confirmed by the Chair, detailed minutes of any decision of the Board must be made and detail:

- a. the action to be taken in order for a progression decision to be made;
- b. the outcomes that the Chair may ratify depending on the outcome.

- C6.3 A student may not progress to the next stage or level of study (as defined in Section B.2) until they have satisfied the requirements of the current stage or level of study for which they have been registered and may not register for modules from the next stage or level of study until they have progressed. Progression must be confirmed by the Progression and Award Board.
- C6.4 A student, providing the module is compensatable, and they have achieved a minimum mark of 30% in each assessment component and an overall level average of 40%, may be offered an in-year referral as specified in Section C.6 above:
- a. may be compensated at the end of the level by the Progression and Award Board on the basis of the original failed mark for the module, not the mark for the referral;
  - b. may be compensated at the end of the level by the Progression and Award Board on the basis of the original failed mark for the module, without having taken up the opportunity of the referral;
  - c. may not be offered further referral opportunities in the failed module after the Progression and Award Board has confirmed a progression decision unless that progression decision is to allow for those referrals to be completed.
- C6.5 A student who does not achieve their full qualification having exhausted all retake opportunities and achieves 120 credits at level 4 may be asked if they would like to accept an exit award (see Regulations A4.4). Where an exit award is not conferred, a Statement of Results outlining the credit successfully completed will be issued.

## **C7 Compensation of Modules**

- C7.1 Where a student has attempted the required number of credits at Level 4 or Level 5, failure in up to 20 credits at each level may be compensated by the Progression and Award Board, providing that the module is compensatable and the student has;
- a. achieved at least a 30% in each component of assessment in the module;
  - b. a stage average mark across all modules of at least 40%; or
  - c. a compensatable module is identified as such in the validation documentation.

When compensation of a module is considered the Assessment Board must be assured that all programme level learning outcomes have been met.

## **C8 Discretion of the Assessment Boards**

- C8.1 Module Assessment Boards and Progression and Award Boards have the power to exercise discretion through the application of their academic judgement to ensure that students are treated equitably and that academic standards are maintained. In exercising their discretion Module Assessment Boards and Progression and Award Boards must take account of recommendations from the Mitigation Panel and views of the External Examiner(s) and should ensure that decisions are taken in the spirit of these Regulations. Decisions reached as a result of the exercise of the Board's discretion must be minuted and be supported by a statement setting out the reasons for the decision.
- C8.2 Boards will be required to exercise their discretion in the case of:
- a. decisions relating to students with extenuating circumstances; and
  - b. decisions relating to cohorts or to individual students whose academic experience has been disrupted for reasons beyond their control other than those which naturally fall within the terms of extenuating circumstances.

## **C9 Extenuating Circumstances**

- C9.1 It is the responsibility of students to attend examinations and submit work for assessment as required and to report to the Mitigation Panel, in writing, in advance of the published date(s) of the relevant Module Assessment Board(s), any extenuating circumstances which may have affected any aspect of their assessment.
- C9.2 If a student fails to provide information about extenuating circumstances in accordance with the procedures governed by these regulations but subsequently is able to show good cause why they were unable to do so the Mitigation Panel has the authority to make a determination based upon the evidence presented. The decision of the Mitigation Panel will be reported to the next meeting of the Module Assessment Board, and where relevant to the Progression and Award Board.
- C9.3 If the Module Assessment Board (MAB) and/or Progression and Award Board (PAB) accepts the recommended outcome of the Mitigation Panel with respect to the extenuating circumstances presented by a student, the Board

shall act in a manner appropriate to the case, in line with the following:

- a. a student has the right to be re-assessed as if for the first time in any or all the components of assessment, as specified by the Module Assessment Board. If an assessment affected by illness, or other cause, was itself a second or subsequent attempt the student shall be permitted to re-sit as if for the second or subsequent time;
  - b. where a student has failed a module and the Module Assessment Board accepts a plea of extenuating circumstances the Progression and Award Board may permit the student to pass the module by compensation with a maximum mark of 40%; and
  - c. where a student has passed a module and the Module Assessment Board accepts a plea of extenuating circumstances, the Board will not amend the mark but will report its findings to the Progression and Award Board.
- C9.4 Any award listed in these Regulations may be conferred posthumously by a Progression and Award Board, provided that the normal conditions of award are satisfied. The Progression and Award Board may seek permission of the Principal to make an award where the normal conditions of the award are not fully met, but the Progression and Award Board is nevertheless satisfied that the student would have qualified for the award for which they were a candidate.

## **C10 Academic Integrity**

- C10.1 Students will be advised of the importance of academic integrity and the nature of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of unfair practice at induction and at other appropriate times throughout their studies.
- C10.2 Prior to any cases being presented at an Academic Malpractice Panel of Inquiry, all cases are investigated in line with the HE Academic Malpractice procedure and the AMBer Tariff.
- C10.3 Where an Academic Malpractice Panel of Inquiry takes place, it will determine an outcome based on the AMBer Tariff and evidence available at the time. Incidents of proven academic malpractice will be reported at the Module Assessment Board, or Progression and Awards Board.
- C10.4 Outcomes will depend on the nature and severity of the academic malpractice in accordance with the AMBer Tariff which is included in the HE Academic Malpractice procedure.

## **C11 Professional Suitability**

- C11.1 A student studying on a qualification regulated by a professional or statutory body may be governed by additional professional principles and practices. Students will be advised of the nature of professional suitability principles at induction and at other appropriate times throughout their studies.
- C11.2 The College will operate a Fitness to Practise panel to consider admitted or found cases of professional misconduct. All allegations of professional misconduct will be fully investigated prior to consideration by the Fitness to Practise Panel following the procedure laid down in the guidance and procedures for dealing with professional misconduct.
- C11.3 Where a panel finds a student guilty of professional misconduct the panel may impose a penalty. Penalties will depend on the nature and severity of the professional misconduct and are outlined in the guidance and procedures for dealing with professional misconduct.
- C11.4 Where a student has been found guilty of serious professional misconduct the relevant professional and/or statutory body will be informed where required.
- C11.5 Failure to meet these professional standards may result in the student being unable to practice professionally and possibly asked to withdraw from the programme.

## **C12 Appeal against a Decision of an Assessment Board**

- C12.1 All requests for reviews of assessment decisions will be conducted in accordance with the Academic Appeals Policy.
- C12.2 A student may appeal against a decision made by a Module Assessment Board or a Progression and Award Board only on the grounds identified in the published policy and procedure. All academic appeals must be made in writing and be received within the time stipulated in the published procedure.

## Section D Regulations Relating to External Examiners

This section describes how the College uses External Examiners to ensure independent quality assurance of student work.

It describes the professional obligations of the External Examiners and their responsibilities.

### D1 The College's Responsibilities to External Examiners

- D1.1 The College regards the External Examiner system as critical to assuring, through independent academic judgement, the confirmation of the quality and standards of its validated provision. The College requires its staff to respond promptly to the advice and feedback of its External Examiners.
- D1.2 The College is responsible for nominating and approving the appointment of External Examiners for its validated awards.
- D1.3 The College sets and keeps under review, annually, the regulations and procedures related to external examining.
- D1.4 The College will provide External Examiners with an induction following their appointment. In the case of an External Examiner being new to examining, a mentor will be appointed.
- D1.5 The College will ensure that reports of External Examiners are received, formally considered and, where necessary, that appropriate action is taken in response to them. External Examiners will be sent a timely response, setting out the action to be taken following receipt of their reports. The actions will be added to the Quality Development Plan whose progress is monitored.
- D1.6 An account of the responses made to the issues raised by External Examiners will be made in the annual programme report.

### D2 The Rights and Responsibilities of External Examiners

- D2.1 The role of External Examiners approved by the College for its validated awards is to provide commentary on the assurance that the standards of College validated awards are maintained and that students are treated fairly. To carry out these responsibilities, External Examiners must:
  - a. judge students impartially on the basis of the work they submit for assessment, without being influenced by previous association with the programme, the staff of the College or any of its students;

- b. be able to compare the performance of students with that of their peers undertaking comparable programmes of higher education elsewhere and in the light of subject benchmarks and qualification descriptors, as appropriate.
- c. be consulted about and report on any proposed changes to the approved assessment regulations;
- d. have the right to meet students and staff, and seek to exercise this right wherever practicable;
- e. ensure that assessments are conducted in accordance with these regulations;
- f. participate as required in any review of decisions about individual students or awards taken during the examiner's period of office; and
- g. report to the College on any matters of serious concern arising from any assessments which put at risk the academic standards of the College's validated awards;

D2.2 In addition to D2.1 External Examiners must;

- a. be consulted on the form and content of proposed examination papers, coursework and other assessments that count towards the award, to enable them to judge whether students will be able to fulfil the aims and learning outcomes of the programme and reach the required standards. This should include approval of alternative assessments and adjustments made for students with a declared disability or a special need, in order to ensure that all students will be assessed fairly in relation to the programme specifications and regulations;
- b. have access to all assessed work and consider samples of the work of students proposed for each category of award and for failure, in order to ensure that assessment criteria have been interpreted and applied correctly and that there is parity of assessment across the cohort;
- c. report to the Module Assessment Board on their findings from the moderation of student work as per D2.1e;
- d. report annually to the College on the overall academic standards as well as on the effectiveness of the assessment and any lessons to be drawn from them;

- e. receive a timely response to comments raised within the annual report; and
- f. In addition to D2.1 Chief External Examiners must attend the meetings of the Progression and Award Boards at which decisions on recommendations for progression and awards are made and ensure that those recommendations have been arrived at in accordance with the College's requirements and normal practice UK Higher Education.

### **D3 Non-attendance at Assessment Board Meetings**

- D3.1 At **Module Award Boards**, where exceptional circumstances prevent the attendance of the Module External Examiner, the board should be informed in advance of the non-attendance and may only endorse assessment decisions if the Academic Standards Report is received from the Module External Examiner. This should be submitted in advance to the meeting of the board of examiners so that the Module External Examiner's comments can be formally considered and recorded. The Academic Standards report must confirm that they were fully involved in the sample moderation of assessment and the external examining process.
- D3.2 At **Progression and Award Boards**, where exceptional circumstances prevent the attendance of the External Examiner, the Progression and Award Board is not authorised to ratify students' progress decisions or to recommend the conferment of an award upon a student. The Progression and Award Board may;
- a. provisionally agree progress and award decisions pending the receipt of the External Examiners Approval report. This report should be submitted to the board of examiners following the External Examiners review of the board papers and approved minutes in a timely manner. The Approval report must confirm that External Examiner is fully satisfied that due process was followed, and that a fair and consistent approach has been evidenced;
  - b. request the attendance of another suitable External Examiner;
- D3.3 Progression and Award Board decisions may not be published until endorsement of the progress or award decision has been received from the Chief External Examiner.
- D3.4 Non-attendance by an External Examiner without good cause and without prior notification will instigate a review of their appointment.

## D4 Criteria for the Appointment of External Examiners

- D 4.1 The College will apply the latest UK (QAA) Quality Code Advice and Guidance set out for appointing External Examiners and ensure that External Examiners are competent to undertake their responsibilities.
- D4.2 The College will use the criteria to ensure that potential conflicts of interest are identified and resolved prior to appointing External Examiners or as soon as they arise.
- D4.3 The College will appoint External Examiners who can show appropriate evidence of the following:
- a. knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality;
  - b. competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof;
  - c. relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate;
  - d. competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures;
  - e. sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers;
  - f. familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed;
  - g. fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that External Examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements)
  - h. meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies;
  - i. awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula; and

- j. competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

D4.4 The College will not appoint as External Examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances.

- a. A member of a governing body or committee of the College or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the appointing institution.
- b. Anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study.
- c. Anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question.
- d. A former staff or student of the College unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the External Examiner have completed their programme(s).
- e. A reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution.
- f. The succession of an External Examiner from an institution by a colleague from the same department in the same institution.
- g. The appointment of more than one External Examiner from the same department of the same institution.
- h. An External Examiner employed by, or having a professional relationship with another HEI which could be construed as a conflict of interest.
- i. An External Examiner who cannot demonstrate recent current HE teaching experience.

D4.5 The College will ensure that an External Examiner appointment complies with the following principles for their term of office:

- a. the duration of an External Examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity.
- b. an External Examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances

but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

- c. External Examiners normally hold no more than two External Examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.
- d. External Examiner tenure will commence once the External Examiner is contracted. This will include moderation of re-assessment activity. An exception to that practice may only be approved if the start date of a programme differs from this start period. External Examiners should remain available after the last assessments with which they are to be associated to deal with any subsequent review of decisions.

## **D5 Nomination of Individuals Retired from their Academic or Professional Posts**

- D5.1 It is the College's expectation that External Examiner nominations are submitted on behalf of individuals who hold recent substantive academic or professional posts. Where exceptionally a nomination is received on behalf of someone who has retired from their academic or professional post, the College will consider the nomination provided that a robust case can be made for the nominees continuing academic or professional currency for the duration of the proposed appointment.

## **D6 The Nomination Process**

- D6.1 The College will organise the appraisal of External Examiner nominations through the Higher Education Approval Committee. The recommendations from this committee will be reported to the HE Academic Standards and Quality Board.
- D6.2 In making recommendations for the appointment of External Examiners for a programme, the committee will be seeking to ensure that the External Examiners will be competent and impartial to ensure that students are fairly assessed.
- D6.3 Nominations should be received normally three months before duties of the examiner are expected to be taken up. A nomination should be made on the appropriate College application form and include the nominee's curriculum vitae.
- D6.4 At any stage a nomination may be rejected by the College. In addition, the College can request further details or clarification from the nominating

staff, and/or nominated individual at any point.

## **D7 Approval of External Examiners**

D7.1 A formal appointment of an External Examiner may only be made once their nomination had been discussed at the Higher Education Approval Committee. The presentation of all appointments will be made to HE Academic Standards and Quality Board. These will be noted at Academic Board.

## **D8 Requests for Extension of Approval of External Examiners**

D8.1 The nomination process is also used for applications to extend the period of approval of existing External Examiners or to extend their duties to other related programmes such as a new pathway or a top-up award. Requests for extension of period of approval may only be considered in extenuating circumstances, in which case a clear rationale for the request must be provided using the appropriate nomination form.

D8.2 The term of office of an existing External Examiner may be extended, in extenuating circumstances, up to a maximum of 12 months beyond the expiry of the original appointment of 4 years.

## **D9 Notification of Decisions**

D9.1 New College Durham will send a letter of offer and terms and conditions of employment only once an External Examiner nomination is approved by the HE Approval Committee.

D9.2 The College will supply all newly appointed External Examiners with relevant briefing material to enable them to undertake their duties.

D9.3 All External Examiners will undergo an induction to the College to provide clarification of the College's expectations, reporting lines and the relationship between examiners and the College and an introduction to the academic regulations pertinent to their role.

## **D10 Payment of Fees**

D10.1 The payment of fees to an External Examiner is made in accordance with the published 'External Examiners Fees Schedule'. The level of fee remission will be reviewed regularly.

## **D11 Termination of Approval of External Examiners**

D11.1 If a School wishes to terminate the appointment of an External Examiner, the College must approve the termination and be informed in advance of the grounds for termination. A reasonable minimum period of notice should apply.

D11.2 The College reserves the right to terminate approval of External Examiners who do not produce reports in the required timescale or to an appropriate standard. Circumstances that may constitute grounds for termination include;

- a. repeated failure to attend a Progression and Award Board without good reason, or prior notification;
- b. new conflict of interest due to change of their position subsequent to the appointment;
- c. discontinuation of the programme;
- d. non-submission of the annual report; and,
- e. Inability/unwillingness to fulfil duties.

If possible, termination should occur at a natural point in the assessment cycle, such as after the final Assessment Board at the end of the academic year.

## **D12 External Examiner Reports to Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies**

D12.1 An External Examiner having responsibility for a programme which is subject to the external requirements of a PSRB will be expected to provide such reports to the PSRB as required.

## **D13 Module External Examiners' Reports**

D13.1 External Examiners are required to submit an annual report to the College, and which provides informative comment and recommendations upon whether or not;

- a. the programme is maintaining the threshold academic standards set for the award in accordance with the frameworks for higher education qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements;
- b. the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and

fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s) and is conducted in line with the institution's policies and regulations; and

- c. the academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which the External Examiners have experience.

And which also provides comment and recommendation on any good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment observed by the External Examiners; and opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students.

D13.2 It is expected that such reports will be received in a timely manner following the Module Boards at which assessment decisions are confirmed. The College standard template for the submission of reports must be used by the Module External Examiner.

D13.3 The purpose of the report is to enable the Higher Education Academic Standards & Quality Board to judge whether the programme is meeting its stated objectives and to require that the teaching team make any necessary improvements, either immediately or at the next revalidation. Programme teams are required to provide timely written feedback to External Examiners on action taken in response to their reports.

D13.4 Where an External Examiner's report raises issues which call into question the quality of the programme or the standards of the award, the College requires an immediate account from the Programme Leader of the measures being put in place to consider the issues and identify and rectify deficiencies.

## Section E – Regulations Governing Recruitment, Admission and Registration to Programmes

This section describes the criteria for admitting and registering students to programmes.

It describes entry requirements and the criteria for Recognition of Prior Learning to allow students with previous study or experience to carry this forward into their programme.

It also states in what scenario a student's registration may be terminated by the College.

### E1 General Principles

- E1.1 The College aims to provide first class learning and training for individuals, business and the community and makes a public commitment to involve all people but with a specific focus on the full range of protected characteristics.
- E1.2 The admission of an individual applicant to a programme is at the discretion of the College. The principles and procedures for admission meet the requirements of QAA Quality Code for Higher Education: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access.
- E1.3 The College accepts all nationally recognised advanced qualifications for entry to higher education and gives equal consideration to academic and vocational qualifications for all programmes of study. The College will also take into consideration skills and expertise gained from work experience and/or vocational training.
- E1.4 Admissions discretion is exercised taking full account of the following general principles:
  - a. that the applicant satisfies the published programme entry criteria;
  - b. that entry requirements, both academic and non-academic are transparent;
  - c. that all promotional materials and activities relating to recruitment to a particular programme are accurate, current and accessible and provide information that will enable applicants to make informed decisions about their options;
  - d. that the selection processes are readily accessible to all those involved in the admissions process, both within and without the College, applicants and their advisers;

- e. that the selection processes are clear and are followed fairly, courteously, consistently, and expeditiously;
- f. that all applicants will be treated fairly and consistently;
- g. that all staff involved in the admission of students are expected to take active steps to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants;
- h. that all those involved in admissions are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities;
- i. that applicants are informed as soon as practicable of the admission decision and where the application has been rejected the reasons upon which this is based;
- j. that applicants are made aware of their obligations when offered a place at the College;
- k. that any significant changes to a programme, occurring between the offer of a place and registration, are communicated to students as quickly as possible, and that they are advised of the options available to them in such circumstances;
- l. that those applicants who have accepted a place are informed fully of enrolment, registration, induction and orientation arrangements;
- m. that the College has policies and procedures for responding to complaints by applicants about the operation of its admissions process, and appeals against the outcome of an application that make clear to all staff and applicants whether, and if so, on what grounds, any such appeals may be considered and that all staff are familiar with those policies and procedures;
- n. that the institution will review their policies and procedures related to student admissions to ensure they remain current and valid considering changing circumstances; and,
- o. that the entry criteria for each programme of study are published annually by the College and are used to determine all questions of eligibility.

## **E2 Entry Requirements**

- E2.1 Entry requirements for each programme will normally be held in the validation documents for the award and also published on the website.
- E2.2 Applicants with non-standard qualifications and/or experience and whose qualifications and/or experience is deemed to be appropriate to gain entry onto a College validated award programme may be admitted onto such a programme.
- E2.3 In appropriate cases such applicants may be asked to undertake assessment activity to assist the College in determining their suitability for the programme.
- E2.4 Some programmes may have other specific entry requirements which may supersede E2.1. These will be explicitly published within the programme literature.
- E2.5 International students normally need to have an English language ability to B2 upper independent or equivalent, and they must at least meet the standard advised by UK Visa and Immigration at the time of application. For UK domiciled students where English is not their first language, they must be able to demonstrate an ability to B2 upper independent or equivalent.
- E2.6 Prior to or at enrolment, applicants will be required to present evidence of the qualifications and/or experience they possess.

## **E3 Admission to Programmes with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**

- E3.1 For the purposes of these Regulations, RPL includes the recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL) and the recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL).
- E3.2 Students will be advised of RPL opportunities in promotional materials and activities relating to recruitment to a particular programme and within all programme literature prior to enrolment.
- E3.3 Students seeking to present a claim for RPL must usually do so prior to their enrolment/offer. Such claims must be based upon production of evidence of prior certificated learning or prior experiential learning and must be presented in the correct application documentation. The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring the student has access to and is aware of the process and application documentation. The evidence presented is used to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. Evidence

submitted must be authentic, current, relevant and sufficient.

- E3.4 The College will convene an HE Approval Committee to consider all RPL applications. The decision of the College whether to grant an RPL claim is final and binding.
- E3.5 Retrospective claims for RPL may only be considered by the HE Approval Committee where extenuating circumstances can be evidenced to show why there was a delay to this process.
- E3.6 Where a claim for RPL is successful, the applicant will be awarded credits attached to the programme to which they are enrolled.
- E3.7 The maximum number of credits which can be claimed by a student when importing RPL from other institutions is 60 credits of a Certificate of HE or 160 credits of a foundation degree programme. A student may apply for direct entry to Level 5 where they can evidence that they fully meet all Level 4 learning outcomes through RPL. A student may apply for direct entry to Level 5 where they can evidence that they fully meet all Level 4 learning outcomes through recognition of prior learning. In this circumstance RPL of 120 Level 4 credits would be approved.
- E3.8 Credits imported by RPL from other institutions may not be used in calculating the classification for an award. The classification for an award is calculated on the basis of the marks obtained from the modules awarded by New College Durham using the appropriate formula specified in Section C of these Regulations to weight the average marks.
- E3.9 Vocational and professional qualifications may be considered as RPL.

## **E4 Registration**

- E4.1 A student will remain registered on a programme for the maximum period of the award or until they have achieved the award, or the registration has been terminated, whichever comes first.
- E4.2 The maximum registration period for a programme of study is the length of the programme plus a further three years.
- E4.3 Module change or late registration is not permitted unless agreed by Programme and Module Leaders having given due regard to specified, exceptional and individual circumstances.
- E4.4 Each student must be registered in each academic year of study for the programme to which they have been admitted and for the modules within that programme structure which they are to take.

- E4.5 A student may not register for more than 120 credits in one academic year.
- E4.6 At each stage students must register for modules in line with any programme -specific regulations which specify compulsory modules and option modules.
- E4.7 The period of registration may be extended if:
- a. the student has had to retake parts of their programme of study (C6);
  - b. the student has been unable to study due to extenuating circumstances (C10); or
  - c. the student has taken a suspension of studies (E4.10)
- E4.8 A student's registration may be terminated if the student has:
- a. committed a serious disciplinary offence or been deemed unfit to study;
  - b. exhausted all opportunities to remedy failure or made insufficient progress through their programme of study at the required stage;
  - c. not met the attendance or engagement requirements as described in the College's engagement policies;
  - d. formally notified Academic Registry of a decision to withdraw from the programme; or
  - e. failed to comply with their financial commitment to the College.
- E4.9 Students will be informed of the requirement for registration in the University Centre Terms and Conditions.
- E4.10 A student may apply for a suspension of studies for a maximum of twelve consecutive months. Any extension of this period must be approved by the College's Suspension of Studies Panel.

## Glossary and Index

**Academic Award:** an academic award is an award conferred on a student by an Assessment Board on the completion of a designated programme at the appropriate level(s), with a specific title. Where an award is a nationally recognised qualification, the standards of the award align with the FHEQ. A record of awards validated by the College is held on a central College Register. New College Durham Academic Awards include the validated awards of Foundation Degree, or the Certificate of Higher Education (in their chosen subject).

**Academic Integrity:** is the expectation that teachers, students and all members of the academic community will act with honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Breaching academic integrity can also be described as 'academic misconduct', 'academic dishonesty' or 'academic malpractice'.



**Approval** is the process whereby the Principal authorises an award to proceed to delivery based on a judgement having been reached through a review process on whether a programme meets the requirements of the Academic Regulations for the Validated Awards of New College Durham. Approval processes also apply to programmes which are modified or re-validated.

**Assessment Board:** the formal Board which confers awards and credits on behalf of New College Durham.

**Assessment criteria:** descriptions of the standards required to achieve a particular mark or set of marks in assessed activities in a given subject area and at a specified level. The College's generic criteria define a basis for the academic standards expected at each level. Subject-specific criteria are aligned to the generic criteria.

**Carry forward:** in exceptional instances, where a student has been unable to complete Level 4 assessments due to unforeseen circumstances, an assessment board may grant a student the opportunity to complete that assessment whilst progressing on to Level 5 of their programme. A maximum of 20 credits can be carried forward in this manner.

**Classification:** A system used to assess and categorise a student's overall performance in their programme. Different levels of programme use different classification systems.

**Compensation:** the mechanism for allowing marginal underperformance in one module resulting in that module being failed to be offset by a stronger performance in other modules.

**Component of assessment:** an agreed assessment activity, an examination or a

piece of course work, defined in the module specification and given a weighting to indicate the contribution of the mark for that work to the assessment of the module as a whole. Where several pieces of work make up a component of assessment, the marks for all the pieces of work must be aggregated and a single mark returned for the component of assessment. When a programme is validated, the assessment strategy for each module is required to identify how many components of assessment are used for the module. (If more than one component is included, the strategy must state whether there is a pass mark attached to each component or there is an overall grade).

**Conferred:** when an award is granted to an individual by an Assessment Board with the Authority of the powers obtained from the Privy Council the award is said to have been conferred.

**Credit:** this is a measure of the volume of student learning time required to achieve defined learning outcomes at a given level. A full-time undergraduate workload is normally 120 credits per year representing 1200 hours of notional learning time.

**Credit rating:** the process of assigning to a module a number of credits at a specific level, and the result of that process.

**Defer:** Student failed a component of a module and has a second attempt with mitigation to extend submission deadline.

**Design** is the process of constructing a programme that meets the requirements for a specific award of the College. The design must facilitate the delivery of the intended learning outcomes and required standards as specified by such external bodies as PSRBs and the DQB for Higher Education. Development teams should ensure that the design of a programme of study is integrated with the processes of approval, monitoring and review.

**Designated Quality Body (DQB):** *An organisation which has the authority to assess the quality and standards of a provider in relation to the relevant rules and regulations imposed on them.*

**Exit Award:** An exit award is a qualification which may be awarded on successful completion of an intermediate point in the studies in a longer programme of study (when a student leaves the programme) but for which the student has not registered at the outset.



**Extenuating Circumstances:** unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances that could have, or did have, a significant adverse effect on the academic performance of a student. In response to these, mitigation may be applied to a student's marks, either before or after an assessment board.



**Fitness to Practise:** the suitability of a person to operate as a professional within their field of qualification. Rules for this in the context of studying for a qualification are usually set by a PSRB.



**Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ):** *The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies* sets out the different levels of higher education qualifications and the requirements for each of these

**Formative assessment:** Assessments which are non-contributory in this way are referred to as formative assessments. They are used to assist students in their learning by preparing them for summative assessments and providing them with feedback which identifies strengths and areas for development.

**Generic programme regulations:** Regulations which automatically apply to all validated foundation degree programmes of the College.

**Learning outcomes:** statements of what the successful student will know, understand and/or be able to do. Achievement of learning outcomes is demonstrated through summative assessments.

**Level:** the indicator of challenge, complexity, depth of study and student autonomy. All modules are attributed to an academic level and an individual module cannot span more than one level. There are eight credit levels used in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and of these levels 4 to 8 represent the types of work undertaken in HE as described in the Framework for HE Qualifications (FHEQ) and the related national credit guidelines. Foundation degrees sit within Levels 4 and 5 of the FHEQ.

Mitigation (see **Extenuating Circumstances**)



**Notional learning time:** the length of learning time which it is estimated will be taken on average by a typical student to achieve a given volume of credit. Guidance from the OfS recognised standards is that 1 HE credit is normally equivalent to 10 notional learning hours.

**Office for Students (OfS):** The independent regulator for Higher Education in England.

**Periodic Review** is the process which provides an in-depth assessment of the development of a programme (or group of programmes), over a period of time, together with an appraisal of its continued relevance and standing, leading to formal recommendations concerning the future of the programme and which may lead to revalidation of the programme(s). Periodic review is based on the evidence generated by the annual reports produced by teaching teams for their programmes.

**Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PRSB):** These are bodies which have statutory authority over a profession, and which set out requirements that must be met for a person to be qualified as a practitioner.

**Programme:** a programme is a complete study route with its own aims and learning outcomes consisting of combinations of modules and leading to a specific named academic award.

**Programme specific regulations:** Regulations which are specific to an individual named programme and are additional to the College generic regulations. Such regulations require the specific approval of a validation panel, and where they involve a variation to the College Regulations the variation must be approved by the Academic Board. Such regulations should be communicated to students in the programme and/or module handbook(s), as appropriate.

**Reassessment:** there are two types of reassessment opportunities a) resubmission and b) resit. Resubmission will require a student to redo and resubmit a failed piece of work, based upon feedback from the tutor. A resit will require a new assessment task being undertaken. Normally the circumstances for the latter have been determined by the type of assessment e.g. exam, practice assessment, presentation etc.

**Refer:** a student has failed a component of assessment at first attempt and is required to complete a further assessment in order to gain the credits for their award. The second attempt will be capped at the pass mark (usually 40%).

**Registration:** inclusion of a student on the Register of the awarding body for the qualification. In this case the awarding organisation is New College Durham.

**Resubmission:** where a student is referred in an assessment they will resubmit a reworked assignment following feedback, or a new piece of work if outlined in the module guide, within a 6 week period from the date of their feedback. The resubmission will be capped at the pass mark (usually 40%).

**Resit:** where a student is referred in an exam, the student will be eligible to take another exam at the next available opportunity. This second attempt will be capped at the pass mark (usually 40%).

**Retake:** where a student has failed assessments at both first attempt and resubmission/resit, the assessment board may offer them a retake opportunity. This means the student will need to complete all or part the failed module(s) again. Students cannot retake modules that have been confirmed as passed to improve on their marks.

**Semesterisation:** The division of a normal year of study into two study periods of

equal length.

**Stage:** an indication of the structure of a programme such that each stage normally equates to one academic year of study irrespective of the level(s) of the modules taken within that stage.

**Summative assessment:** Assessments which contribute marks used to determine a student's ability to progress from one stage of a programme to the next, and which are used to determine an overall award classification, are referred to for the purpose of these Regulations as summative assessments.

**Suspension of Studies:** Suspending studies is the process by which a student can temporarily withdraw from their studies to pause their learning activities. They will not be enrolled during this time but will remain on the Register for the award. The student can then return to the same stage of the programme and resume studies after an agreed period of time.



**Termination:** where a student has their Registration revoked.

**Threshold Standards** are the level of achievement that a student has to reach to gain an academic award. The threshold level of achievement should be the same as similar or equivalent awards across the UK. Threshold standards may incorporate both academic and practice-based standards, where relevant.

**Validation** is the process whereby a judgement is reached by a panel of peers about whether or not a programme of study designed to lead to a New College Durham validated award meets the principles and requirements for that award. The validated award must be equivalent in standard to comparable awards delivered by other higher education institutions in the United Kingdom.



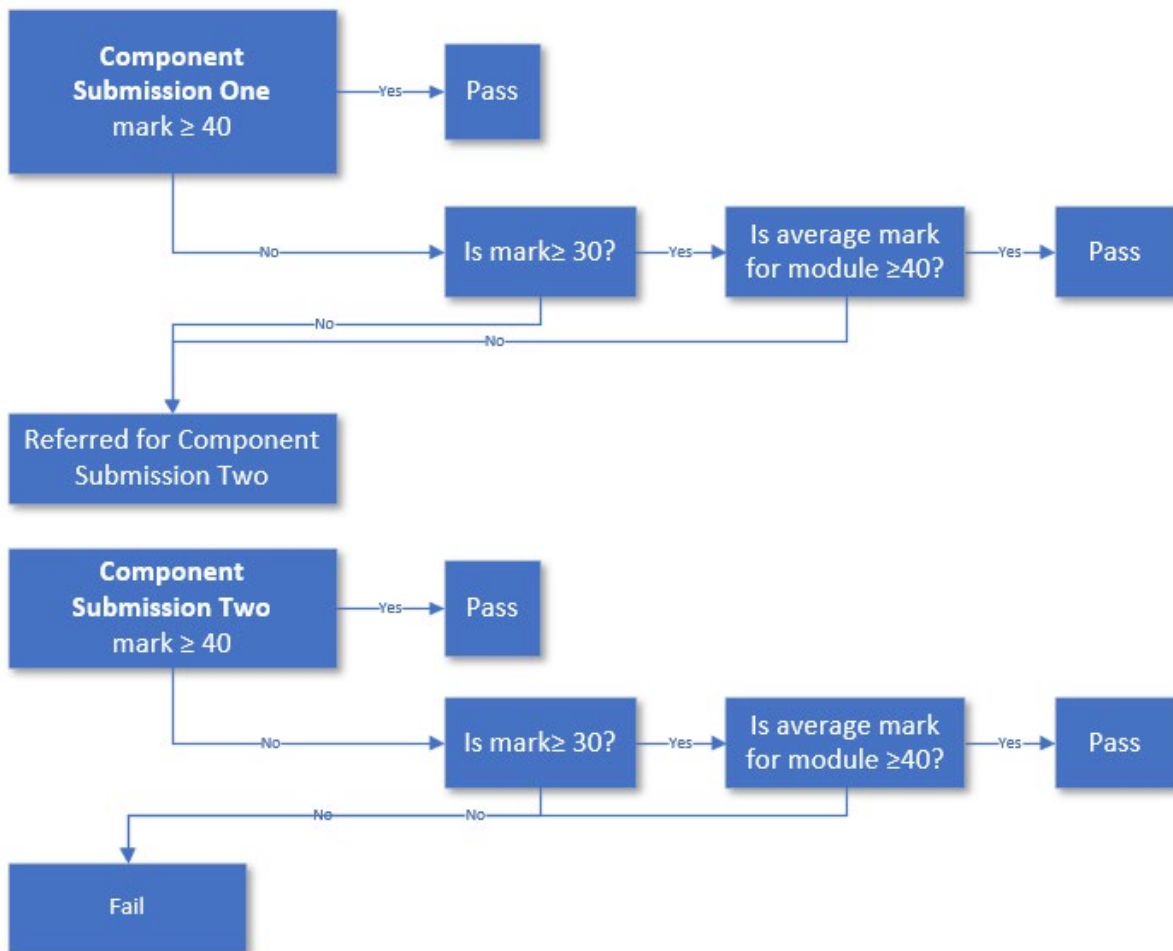
**Weighted Average:** is the calculation of a classification based on the weighted average of the whole of the module grade points.

**Withdrawal:** where a student voluntarily agrees to have their Registration revoked.



**Year:** an indication of the progress of study of a student defined by the number of years (usually academic years) for which they have been registered for a programme. This is irrespective of the stage of study and of the level(s) of the modules involved.

## Appendix A: Submission of Work (Process Flow)



Other regulations that may apply to the process above are Extenuating Circumstances (C10) and Compensation (C8). Component Submission Two may be called a 'second submission', 'resubmission', 'new submission' or 'resit' depending on the programme specification.